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Doolin: History and Memories

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Doolin: History & Memories

By Kevin M. Griffin
with
Kevin A. Griffin & Brendan J. Griffin

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Unless otherwise noted, all other, photographs in the book were taken by Kevin A. Griffin and Robert A. Griffin on a lovely sunny day in September 2020.

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Killilagh 1842*

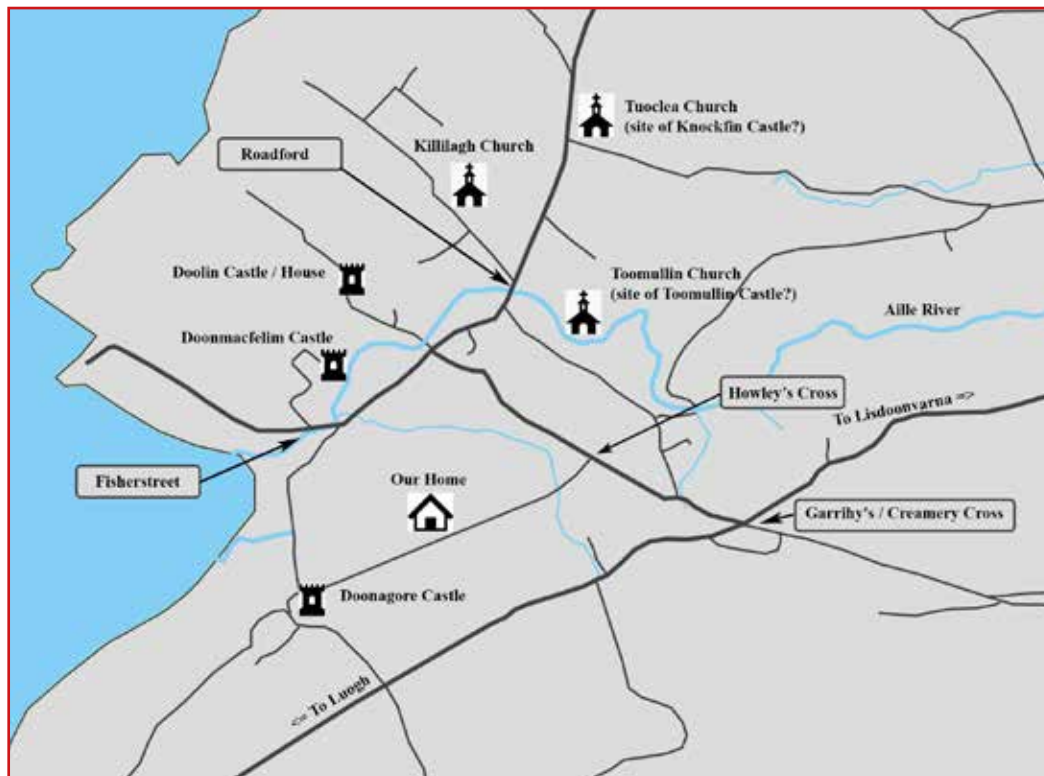
From the index map for the First Edition Ordnance Survey Maps of County Clare.



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Killilagh 2020**

Map of my home area highlighting some of the main locations mentioned throughout this book.



** This simplified map of the area is drawn over an OpenStreetMap base map, for more detail on Open Source Maps see <https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>.

Authors' Foreword

This 'Doolin Project' has been undertaken over the course of many, many years, with a number of false starts and changes of direction. To accommodate a number of different plans and ideas, the book is what the late-great Gay Byrne would have called a *pot-pouri* of stories, tales, historical research and memories. It is not by any means meant to be a definitive history of Doolin, it is merely a gathering of thoughts and reflections, sometimes supported by documentary evidence, while at other times entirely drawn from memories and personal experiences.

We apologise for any errors or omissions, and hope you can forgive our mistakes, which are unintentional. We also hope that our representation of people and situations is sympathetic and sensitive and presents a good account of the many friends and family we talk about in the various stories and encounters that follow.

We describe situations and random experiences in the hope that they will show the spirit and character of a time, a place and a people from long ago. Perhaps some of the memories are presented in 'soft-focus', but the recollections from those times are happy ones, where life was simpler, and much less complicated.

We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we have enjoyed writing it.

Kevin M. Griffin & Kevin A. Griffin

November 2020

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the many generations of Griffins / Griffys who have gone before us.

In particular we remember Brendan Griffin, who left us in June 2020. Brendan did much to bring these stories to print, and worked tirelessly to put together research and analysis which has added some of his unique style to this publication.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh siad

Introduction

This book is about growing up in Doolin in County Clare, Ireland in the 1940s. It is based heavily on the main author's memories and recollections, reinforced and supported by historical and archival research. Contained herein are a variety of stories and memories, tales and yarns, all documenting a way of life that is now only found in the folklore and historic records of 'old Ireland'.

The selection of episodes and experiences is eclectic, based on memory and reminiscences, chats with friends and family and all is blended with detailed historical investigation. Our overall aspiration is that this book will help to recreate the spirit and character of a time, a place and a people from long ago.

Perhaps some of the memories are presented in 'soft-focus', but we make no apology for this

sentimentality. The recollections from those times are happy ones, where life was simpler, and much less complicated. This book is intentionally situated in what Seamus Ennis described as 'the old world' of Darby Griffy, and is dedicated to our ancestors, who were uncomplicated, yet strong people, in tune with the land, their ancestors, their language and their culture.

While the overall focus of the book is on daily life in Doolin in the 1940s, the documentary and archaeological history of the area is also explored, with sections detailing the main historical features of the landscape, the important landmarks, and historical events. Particular attention is paid to the quarries and mines, and the early education of the area, which were important influences on daily life in the period under exploration.

Landscape, Landmarks and History

Killilagh

Should we call this section ‘Overview of Killilagh, Killeilagh, Tuoclea, Tuath Glæ or Doolin’? One of the challenges when doing research in Ireland is the many derivations of spellings that occur over time, particularly when placenames are translated and transferred from one document or record / system to another. In addition, Irish people have a great tendency to use different names for places, and often these names are not formally recorded anywhere.

The parish of Killilagh, in the Barony of Corcomroe, stretches from the Burren to the Cliffs of Moher and from the sea to the top of Doonagore. Older people however, used the name Tuoclea, but today people generally refer to the area as Doolin. If that wasn’t confusing enough, there are various spellings of the name in Irish. The modern spelling being used is Dúlainn, but growing up we were told the English name Doolin is derived from the Irish name Dubh Linn, which is translated as a black pool. Going to school, we used the spelling Dúbhlinn, and that is how it appears in the copybooks collected by the Folklore Commission in the 1930s.

Tuoclea was the name people used for the local church, and the name derived from a little village of a few houses in the townland of Boherboy (Bothar Bui) but gave its name to the whole area. Likewise, Doolin was a small townland, but because it was here that the Macnamara Castle, later known as Doolin House was situated, the area generally became known as Doolin. The name Roadford by which the village near Tuoclea Chapel was formerly known is seldom used nowadays. It was there in Roadford that the main businesses were situated in my time - public houses, shops, tailors, Post Office etc. Nearer the sea is the little village of Fisherstreet, which

consisted mainly of fishermen’s thatched houses in the 1940’s. It is only in recent years that it has developed into a more modern village, due mainly to the local music and cultural traditions, with tourists from around the world being drawn by the revival of traditional music.

Killilagh in Lewis’ Topographical Dictionary

Killilagh was described by Lewis in his 1837 *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (pg. 138), as follows:

KILLEILAGH, a parish, in the barony of CORCOMROE, county of CLARE, and province of MUNSTER, 6¼ miles (N.W. by N.) from Ennistymon, on the road from Ballyvaughan to Ballyaline. This parish comprises 11,332 statute acres, a large part of which consists of mountain pasture and bog. Slate of inferior quality is found at Donagore. Ballyaline Bay is well situated for fishing, and has a coast-guard station, included in the Miltown-Malbay district; and there is a constabulary police station at Knockfin. Off the coast is Innishere, one of the Arran isles, between which and the mainland is the South Sound, or entrance to Galway bay. The principal seats are Doolen, the residence of Major W.N. Mc Namara; Arranview, of F. Mc Namara, Esq., commanding, as its name implies, a fine view of the Arran isles and the coast of Galway; and Ballyaline, of F. Gore, Esq.; besides which there are several other respectable residences. It is a vicarage, in the diocese of Kilfenora, forming part of the union of Kilmanaheen; the rectory is united to those of Kilmoon and Carrune. The tithes amount to £221.10.9., of which £147.13.10 is payable to the rector, and £73.16.11. to the vicar. The church is in ruins. In the R.C.*

* This annotation records money in Pounds, Shillings and Pence (L.S.D.). There were 12 pennies in a shilling, and twenty shillings or 240 pennies in a pound. Currency also included half and quarter pennies, the latter referred to as ‘farthings’, and also crowns and half crowns, a crown being worth five shillings, a half crown being worth two shillings and six pence. In Ireland, this currency system was decimalised on 15 February 1971.

divisions it is part of the union or district of Arranview, or Tuoclea, and has a chapel at Knockfin. There are one public and three private schools. At Glassie, and Donagore, are the ruins of the castles respectively so called, the latter being a circular tower on a square base; and at Ballynalacken, on a rocky eminence near the sea, stands the castle of that name, which is about to be repaired by J. O'Brien, Esq. its proprietor. Boetius Clancy, a celebrated chieftain, formerly resided at St. Catherine's, where a mound of earth is still shown as the spot where his castle once stood.

Pre-Decimal Irish Currency



The first Irish coin series consisted of eight coins:

- Farthing / Feoirling (1/4 penny);
- Halfpenny / ha'penny Leathphingin (1/2 penny);
- Penny / Pingin;
- Threepence / Thrupenny Bit / Leath Reul / Leath Réal;
- Sixpence / Reul / Réal / Tanner;
- Shilling / Scilling;
- Florin / Flóirín;
- Half crown / Leath Chroróin.

These were first issued on 12 December 1928 and remained as legal currency in Ireland until 14th February 1971. The 'Lady Lavery' Irish Pound Note illustrated above was in circulation 10th September 1928 until 1976, when they were progressively replaced by the Queen Medb pound notes.

Townlands and Placenames

The townland is the smallest territorial division in Ireland. Their size, position, and name tell us much about these land units, so their study is a rewarding one. Many placenames are derived from our heritage - kind and quality of land, crops, location, physical features, old churches, castles, hills, valleys, streams and woods. They go right back to pre-history; indeed, some of the names are so ancient that we can only guess at their meaning or significance, while others are self-explanatory.

There are a number of lists of the townlands of Killilagh from different sources and ages. This leads to some confusion and the attempted Anglicisation of many has led to further difficulty. The townland lists of Killilagh given here are derived from and analysed using the 1944 list by Ml. McGrath NT & Fr. Larkin CC†. This record coincides with the 1901 Census and gives in all, forty-four townlands. To help analyse the list, we also use the *Books of Survey and Distribution*, 1636-1703, the *Census of Clare*, 1659 and *The Census of Ireland*, 1901 in addition to placename publications by authors such as Frost (*The History and Topography of the County of Clare*, 1893) and Joyce (*The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*, 1869).

The table on the next page provides an interesting exploration of the townland names:

† Some years ago, I was given a copy of *History of The Parish of Lisdoonvarna*. On the front of this 12-page document it states 'compiled in 1944 by Michael McGrath N.T. and James Larkin C.C. From published sources and by talking to old people in the parish'. At the end of the version I was given is the following statement: 'The original is lost, but a copy made from it in October 1st 1969 extant in Lisdoonvarna national school. Copy of same made by Sean Doherty October 1982. Typed and duplicated April-May 1983 by same'.

Townland	Name in Irish	Approximate Meaning of Name
Ardeamush	Ard Sheamuis	Seamus' high place
Aughavinna	Ath an Bhinne	The ford by the hillside
Aughiska Beg	“	“
Aughiska More	Ath Uisce	The water ford
Ballaghaline	Bealach Atha an Linne	The mouth of the ford by the deep pool
Ballinahoan	Baile na Uaimhan	The place of caves. 'Describes exactly' - Frost
Ballycahan	Baile Ui Chathain	O'Kean's place
Ballycullaun	Baile Ui Choileain	Collins' place
Ballynalacken	Baile na Leacan	The hill side
Ballyryan	Baile Ui Riain	O'Reen's residence
Ballysallagh	Baile Sallagh	The muddy place
Ballyvara	Baile Bhearradh	The place of the little hilltops
Ballyvoe	Baile Both	The place of the hovel
Boherboy	Bothar Bui	The yellow road
Caherkinallia (Part)	Cathair CinnAile	The caher by the sea side
Cahermaclanchy	Cathair Mac Fhlancaidhe	McClancy's residence
Cahermacrusheen	Cathair Mac Croisin	MacCruisin's residence
Carnaun	Carnan	A small heap of stones
Carrownacleary	Ceathru na gCleirigh	The clergy's property
Cloghaun	Clochán	Stepping stones or a causeway
Coogyulla	Cuige Uladh	Ulster - the province of. (cf. note)
Craggycuradan East	Creag Ui Curradain	O'Curridan's stony field
Craggycuradan West	“	“
Cronagort East	Cro na Gort	The sheepfold in the field
Cronagort West	“	“
Doolin	Dubh Linn	The dark pool
Doonagore	Dun na gCor	The doon (fort) of the round hills
Doonmacfelim	Dun Mhic Feilim	The stronghold of Felim's son (O'Connor)
Glasha Beg	Glaise	A streamlet
Glasha More	“	“
Gortaclob	Gort an Clob	A place where water is swallowed into the
Island	Oilean	
Killilagh	Cill Aidhleach	The church (by the cliffs?) or of St. Faoile 'I cannot find the name of this Saint in the Martyrologies'
Knockacarn	Cnoc an Cairn	A hill with a heap of stones on top.
Knockagulla	Cnoc an Ghiolla	The hill of the manservant
Knocknaranaghy	Cnoc na Raithne	The hill of the ferns
Laghtmurreda	Leacht Muireadach	Muireada's grave
Luogh North	Leamh	Marsh Mallows (Joyce - Marsh Mallow is a herbal plant)
Luogh South	“	“
Lurrega	Lorga	The Shin - Other places in Clare are called Lurrega because of their long slender shape (Frost)
Oughtdara	Ucht Doireach	Wooded breast or valley
Polluiskaboy	Poll uisce bui	The Yellow water cave
Poulnagun	Poll na gCon	The dogs' cavern
Tirgonean	Tir Gan Ean	The birdless place (or perhaps the place of the rabbits)
Toomullin	Tuath muileann	The place of the mill
Toornahoon	Tur na hUaghanna	The cultivated land near the caves

Map of Killilagh Townlands



A detailed map of townlands, parishes and other features in County Clare is provided online at:
<http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/places/townlands/townland.htm>

Landlords

The MacClancys ~ Boetius Clancy*

According to Frost in *The History and Topography of the County of Clare*:

One part of the barony of Corcomroe was called Tuath Glae, an area conterminous with the present parish of Killilagh. It was possessed for some time by a distinct branch of the O'Briens, called Glae, after the name of their lands. It was also the home of a family distinguished in the annals of Ireland for their accomplishments as lawyers and teachers of law. I allude to the MacClancys, whose seat was at Cahir mac Clancy, and whose school was at Knockfinn, where the present Catholic church of Tuath Glae stands (Frost, 1893).

It is said that these MacClancys were hereditary Brehons of Thomond and they played an active role in the public affairs of Ireland, being authors and witnesses for many legal documents of the time.

It would seem that an almost essential thing required to constitute the validity of a legal instrument in Thomond was the signature of a MacClancy (Frost, 1893).

This important family owned a large part of the modern parish of Killilagh which was held free from any rent or taxation due to their position as chief judges. The great school of Knockfinn appears to have been very large, and it was renowned throughout Ireland. For centuries it was

an acclaimed place of learning, and its owners were honoured and prosperous.

A change came towards the end of the sixteenth century when Boetius Clancy, the then representative of the family, 'forsook his faith' and gave his allegiance to the English. He was rewarded by his new lords with the office of sheriff of the newly-constituted county of Clare. One particular atrocity at his hands was the hanging and mass burial of survivors from one of the ships of the Spanish Armada. Years later, when Spanish emissaries came to recover the remains of their countryman they could not be found, owing to the inhumane pit burial of the crew by order of MacClancy. To this day the place called Cnocan an Chrochaire (hangman's hill) is identified as the place where the Spanish sailors are said to have been executed in sight of the cruel MacClancy's house. Ironically, fifty years later, under the Cromwellian settlement, the MacClancys were deprived of every acre they possessed, and their family disappeared into obscurity. In the archives of the Folklore Commission, there is a copybook which belonged to my brother Thomas. This contains a story which was provided by my father, that describes Caher Mac Clancy. At the end he includes the following verse about Boetius (attributed to the 'Poet of Thomond'), who was disgraced when he changed his religion:

*The Brightest sun that ever shone
By cloud at times is blinded
The Clearest stream that ever ran
Leaves mud and weeds behind it.[§]*

As a final comment, the Clancys are not entirely forgotten in the rich local folklore of Killilagh,

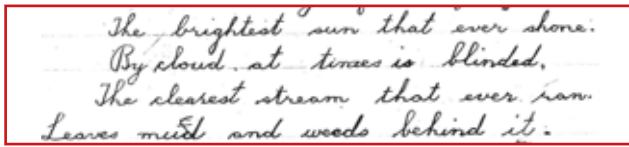
‡ The MacClancy family like most other Irish families held the tradition of using the same Christian names in succeeding generations – in their case, names such as Conor, Hugh (Aodh), Teige and Boetius. This can lead to confusion.

The name Boetius was particularly popular with the MacClancys and used by various generations - sons, grandsons, cousins etc. The name Boetius is of Irish origin and means 'foolish pride.' It was not an uncommon name but has gone out of fashion and I have never known anyone of that name in Killilagh, due perhaps to the infamous Boetius Clancy of Knockfinn.

§ The National Folklore Commission's 'Schools Collection' involved more than 50,000 children in the 26 counties of the new Republic recording about 740,000 pages of folklore and local traditions between 1937 and 1939. My Brother Thomas was one of the participants of this project, and in a couple of places I have included material from his 'copybooks.'

Extract From my Brother Thomas' Copybook

© The Irish Folklore Commission



but not for good reasons. As a child I would have associated the name Boetius with cruelty, and the image of a despot. His name was usually coupled with that of Cromwell to strike fear into the hearts of wayward children who would be threatened with reference to:

Bothalam agus Crumail.

A related use of his name was a derogatory word we used in Doolin for someone who was full of 'airs and graces beyond their station' or a poseur – they would be referred to as a 'Boiseach'.

There are also old stories of Boetius appearing after his death in various parts of the parish and the mystery of his lost treasure. I remember hearing old men discussing a riddle which related to his mysterious missing wealth:

Trí léim laoiigh ón leac go dtí an abhainn.

This translates as 'three warrior's leaps from the lake, towards the sea'. Many of the old people had opinions regarding the length of a warrior's leap, and the particular lake in question. I wonder how many holes were dug over the years, trying to find that elusive hoard.

Major William Nugent Macnamara MP

A branch of the Macnamara¹ family was established in north Clare following the Cromwellian Land Settlement in the mid-seventeenth century, the first arrival of the name being Teige Macnamara who settled in Ballyvaughan in 1659. The youngest of Teige's seven sons was Bartholomew

Macnamara, born 1685, and his eldest son was William Macnamara, who settled in Doolin after he married Catherine, daughter and heiress of Francis Sarsfield of Doolin. Sarsfield had been granted over 1,400 acres including Doolin in 1679/80. Thus, by the mid 1800s, the Macnamaras had a large estate in the baronies of Burren and Corcomroe, mainly in the parishes of Carran (Burren), Killilagh, Kilmacrehy and Kilmanaheen (Corcomroe). They also owned large parts of the town of Ennistymon.

The great-grandson of Bartholomew, that is Major William Nugent Macnamara (1775-1856) of Doolin House (Castle) was remembered quite fondly in my time as an interesting local character. He was the local landlord in the mid 1800s and was a very wealthy man, reputedly owning 10,000 acres of the best land in Clare. A Member of Parliament for many years representing the county, and also High Sheriff of the county, he was very proactive and supportive of actions that would improve the situation of his tenants. For example, when a school was proposed for the Doolin area, he was enthusiastically in favour of supporting the education of his tenants' children. His generous offer of land or money - 'whatever amount needed will be ready now' - must be acknowledged at a time when few people could, or were willing, to make such an offer. Mac Mahon (2017:7) describes the Major as follows:

Throughout his long life he had the reputation of an Irish Lochinvar [i.e. romantic hero], a dashing cavalier, immensely popular with his peers and tenants alike.

He was a close friend of Daniel O'Connell, and when O'Connell found himself involved in a duel with the army officer d'Eesterre, his measure of confidence in Macnamara is shown in his choice of the Major as his 'second' in the duel. Against the odds, O'Connell won, fatally injuring his opponent. This was said to have been due to

¹ Following the guidance of Mac Mahon (2017) in his wonderful paper on *The Macnamaras of Doolin & Ennistymon*, we use the format Macnamara, with a lower case 'n' as he suggests.

the advice of the Major who in my time, was remembered with pride in Doolin. His obituary in *The Clare Journal* on 13 November, 1856, says that he was known throughout North Clare as ‘the poor man’s magistrate’, and his funeral was described as the largest ever seen in the county and extended for two miles (Mac Mahon, 2017).

H.V. Macnamara

Henry Valentine Macnamara, known as ‘Henry Vee’, grandson of William Nugent was appointed High Sheriff of Clare in 1885. He was also an interesting character, and inherited the estate from his father ‘The Colonel’, an improving landlord who had built much of present day Ennistymon and enlarged his home – Ennistymon House (now the Falls Hotel). Henry Vee is described by his granddaughter Nicolette as ‘a fine figure of a man ... a diehard of the old regime [who was full of] blustering high spirits’. He lived through complicated times for landlords in Ireland. In one episode, he was ambushed by the IRA (in December 1919), near Leamaneh Castle. The Republican volunteers were probably unprepared for the response, whereby, Henry Vee and his party put up a spirited defence and while Macnamara was injured in the neck by gunfire, there were no fatalities. In April 1922, he was sent an ultimatum by the Executive Council of the IRA and on advice he withdrew to London from Ennistymon House, where he died three years later.

Francis Macnamara

The next Macnamara heir was the eccentric and bohemian poet Francis Macnamara, son of Henry Vee. Throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth century he had used Doolin House regularly with his family. His daughter Nicolette wrote about life in Doolin with her colourful father and his artistic friends in her autobiography called *Two Flamboyant Fathers*, which she authored under her married name Devas. Francis moved

in artistic circles and his other daughter Caitlin married poet and writer Dylan Thomas. Francis was friends with the likes of Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats and guests at Doolin House during this time included the writer George Bernard Shaw and regularly the painter Augustus John and his family.

Before Francis inherited the Macnamara estate, Doolin house had been burned down. This occurred some time before the aforementioned IRA ultimatum to his father. Years later, when peace returned to Ireland, Francis, who was then in the third of his three marriages, returned to settle in Clare and retook possession of Ennistymon House. He tried to turn it into a hotel in the 1930s, but his daughter Caitlin suggests that he wasn’t really suitable for such an endeavour. He later moved into in a more modest home on the land and rented his family home to the O’Regan family. Later, Francis moved to Dublin, where he died in 1946. Francis had only one son and three daughters. With the death of his son, John, who had no children, the Ennistymon and Doolin Macnamaras ‘became extinct in the male line’ (Mac Mahon 2017:15).

Interesting Landmarks and Sites

There are many old buildings, churches and castles in the Parish of Killilagh. The Antiquarian Thomas Johnson Westropp in 1905, as part of his Archaeology of the Burren series provided a highly detailed description of many of these structures. He included an exploration of what he labelled the Glasha group of forts and the extensive group of Tooclea Forts. We won't go into detail of the many forts and earthworks here, and sadly, the names of many have been forgotten. However, in many locations, traces of ancient monuments remain. In particular, there is an impressive density of earthwork and stonework forts to the west of the road from Doolin Pier to Ballinalacken Castle, but there are many others such as Cahermaclancy and Cnoc an Stulaire which we will mention later.

Teergonean Court Tomb

One prehistoric site that deserves mention here is Teergonean Court tomb, located in the quiet, secluded limestone pavements to the northwest

Westropp's Map of Tooclea Forts



http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/archaeology/arch_burren/part4_glasha_group.htm

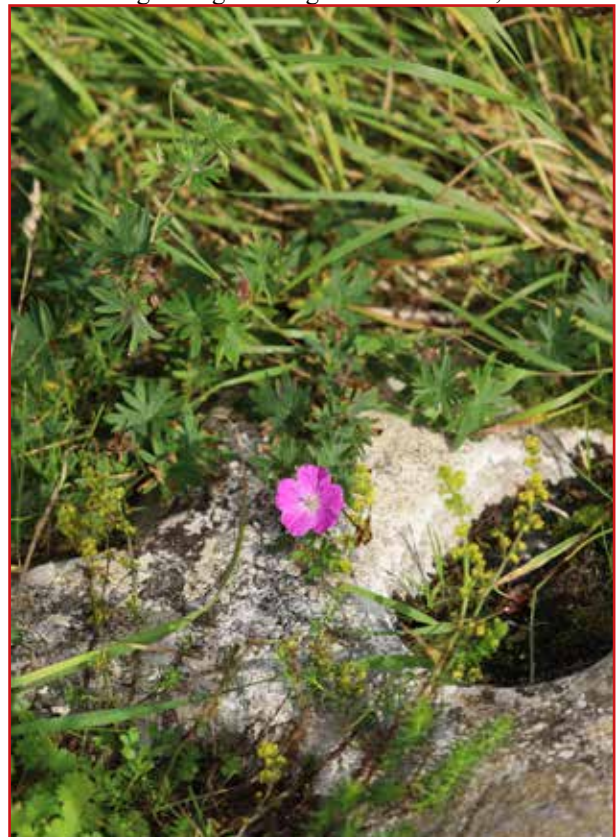
Teergonean Court Tomb, 2020



of Killilagh Church. A court tomb is a megalithic burial structure typically comprised of a 'chamber' and a 'gallery'. These mysterious monuments date from the late stone age (about 4,000 years ago), and are thought to link human burial with astronomical events. Not much of the 'gallery' in Teergonean is in evidence, but the burial chamber is clearly identifiable, lined by 'orthostats' or standing stones.

Bloody Crane's-bill

Found growing in Teergonean Townland, 2020



Cnoc an Stulaire

The lonely silhouette of 'Cruc a'Stulaire, 2020



Cnoc an Stulaire / Cruc a'Stulaire

The lonely standing stone on top of what we called Cruc a'Stulaire, etched dramatically against the grey background of the burren limestone was a constant fixture in my childhood. Recorded in documents as Cnoc an Stulaire (Knockastoolery

Knockastoolery and Poulmagollum, 1842. © OSI Ireland
(Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



according to the first edition Ordnance Survey map of the late 1830s), this is an earthen fort on the top of a hill to the west of Doolin School. At the middle of the structure is a standing stone. The site sometimes appears on maps as Stoolery Hill and it derives its name from the Irish 'stulaire', meaning a peak, a point or even a high stone.

Poulmagollum & Doolin Caves

Doolin is well known in the pot-holing and caving community. For the non-expert, perhaps the best-known feature is the one found in 1952 - a large underground cavern now known as Poll-an-Ionain (or Poll an Eidhneáin, or Doolin Cave), which contains 'the Great Stalactite'. This incredible feature, measuring 7.3 metres (23 feet) in height is claimed to be the longest stalactite in the Northern hemisphere (elsewhere described as one of the largest stalactites in Europe). The 'Great Stalactite' and Doolin Cave have been accessible to the public since 2006.

The Great Stalactite, Doolin Cave.

Photo by Paul Deakin, with thanks to Doolin Cave and Visitor Centre



The overall Doolin cave system has three entry points (with a confusing variety of names): The first is the Fisherstreet Pot / Poll na gColm / Poll na Gollum; the second is Poll an Chronain / St Catherine's One; and the third has been referred to as Aran View Swallet. There are a variety of dangerous mine shafts in the area also.

Growing up, we knew absolutely nothing about caves or underground passages. There is a field not far from the barracks in Fisherstreet, and in

it, surrounded by bushes was a cave or hole that nobody really talked about or questioned [The Fisherstreet Pot]. It was a quirk of nature and you certainly kept well away from it. We knew little about it, it just existed. I suppose it was drilled into us not to go near it. Growing up, I was aware of its name - Poll na Gollum (or Poulmagollum - The hole of the pigeons) but really never thought about it. However, this is a highly important site for anyone interested in the cave complexes in the Doolin area.

Poulmagollum, 2020



A wonderful monograph by Lloyd, about ‘*Doolin-St Catherine Cave*’ published in 1964 provides a highly detailed description of the entire system. According to him, the main entrance to what he calls the ‘Poulnagollum Caves’, which contain Doolin Cave, is via ‘Doolin Pot’ (elsewhere called the Fisherstreet Pot). However, as Lloyd notes, the name Pollnagollum is more usually used by pot-hollers for a cave entrance to the east of Slieve Elva, and is never used for this site. It is estimated that there are over 16 kilometres (9.9 miles) of connected caverns, caves and tunnels underneath the Doolin area, in what is recognised as the longest (and third deepest) cave system on the island of Ireland.

Cnocán an Chrochaire

Cnocán an Chrochaire, or Knockacrochaire as we called it (the hill of the hangings – called Knockaunacroghera in the early Ordnance Survey), is a ‘barrow’ or ancient structure east of Tuath Clae Church. The Spaniards killed by Boetius MacClancy were supposedly hanged

and buried here in 1588. Early in his career T.J. Westropp dug into this Iron Age grave and discovered human bones - but not Spanish ones as he mistakenly assumed. It is thought that there may have been gallows on the mound at some stage.

Knocan an Chrochaire, 1842. © OSI Ireland (Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Killilagh Church and Graveyard, 2020



Old Churches

Westropp discusses three churches in the Parish of Killilagh, in the Barony of Corcomroe.

Killilagh Church

The first church Westropp describes is Killilagh, the 'Parish Church', which many sources (such as O'Donovan, and Curry, 1839) suggest, is called after St. Felie / Faile, 'Cill Fhaile'. It is suggested elsewhere that the name might derive from Cill Ailleach, the church of the cliffs. However, Westropp in his inimitable style, suggests its founder as a St. Lonan 'to whom the well is dedicated'. I don't recall ever hearing evidence of a well anywhere near this site, nor has my research ever unearthed this detail. He describes the church as 'A late, plain building, probably c.1500' (Westropp, 1900-02, p.135), and provides

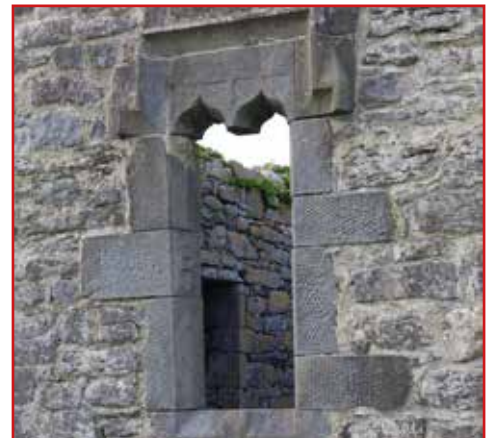
Killilagh Stone Head, 2020

(now housed in The Burren Centre, Kilfenora)



Archaeological & Architectural Features in Killilagh, 2020

Window details, Gravestone of Ml Mcnamara Shoemaker, Macnamara Tomb



Toomullin Church, 2020

Remains of Mine / Quarry works in the background, 2020



detail of the various windows, and carvings, in particular a ‘beautifully chiselled round arch’. Recent restoration works have done wonders for this abandoned site, highlighting the carvings and other features such as the never used Macnamara crypt, and a beautiful gravestone to Micheal Mcnamara, who died in 1864, that is emblazoned with a shoe and shoemaker’s tools, illustrating his trade.

Killilagh Church, 1842. © OSI Ireland
(Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



A wonderful stone head carving from the graveyard, which is now housed in the Burren Centre in Kilfenora Centre went missing in 1971. After an appeal on national television, in 1975 (on the Late Late Show), the carving was located in Northern Ireland and returned to County Clare. Etienne Rynne, writing in the North Munster Antiquarian Journal, proposes that the head may date to the second half of the sixteenth century, which she also suggests would be a good estimate for the church itself.

Oughtdarra Church

There was a small church in Oughtdarra near Ballinalacken, which Westropp attributes in one of his articles to a Sionnach Mac Darrawhich, and he also identifies a well nearby which he (in 1905) names as Toberaneenagh. There is little information in local memory about this ‘little ruined church’ other than the fact that only children were buried in its graveyard. While there are some archaeological remains they are difficult to interpret. It is described on one website as ‘the most overgrown site in Ireland’.

Architectural Details, Toomullin Church, 2020



Toomullin Church

The remains of Toomullin Church and St. Breacan's well stand beside the river to the east of Roadford. Westropp records a 'late church' which he dated to 1480 when he documented the churches of Clare in 1900-02. The original church at the site is not documented anywhere, but, he says the site may date to around 500AD. Westropp also comments that in 1302 this was the church of a separate parish called 'Thuomlynny'. A bronze age brooch was found here in 1941.

My brother Thomas, quoting my father (Jeremiah Griffin – then aged 56) in his school notebook says the following:

St Bricin was born in Mayo and educated in Aran in St Enda's College. The well is situated about a half a mile from the bridge at Roadford at the north east of the old church in Toomullen.

Window Detail, Toomullin Church, 2020



"Roadford Cascade, Co. Clare"

© National Library of Ireland Ref: L_CAB_06216
Note Toomullin Church behind field full of 'grass-cocks'
on far side of river



Toomullin Church, 1842

© OSI Ireland (Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Tuoclea Church

Too modern for Westropp's attention, the Roman Catholic church in Doolin is now called the Church of the Holy Rosary, however, in my day, it was always called Tuoclea Church. Situated on high ground over Doolin, the original church in Tuoclea was a small thatched building on the same site as the present one. It was Father Thomas Healy PP (1820-1830) who constructed that building and had a slate roof put on it. Later, in 1879 the church was enlarged to its present size by Fr. Power PP. Fr. Power also put seats in about half of the body of the Church after he renovated

it. He auctioned these seats to the people. It remained like this until 1935 when Canon Lydon put seats in the rest of the church. It was renovated again in 1974.

It is thought that this church is on the site of the famous Brehon Law school of the MacClancys whose old fort Cahermaclancy was situated about a mile and a half away. Also, nearby (perhaps even on the site of the church) was the castle or manor of Knockfinn first mentioned in the 1500s. Several alternative sites are suggested for Knockfinn Castle (or Manor), one being the site now occupied by Aran View House.

Church of the Holy Rosary / Tuoclea Church, 2020



Castles

In the 1830s, fieldworkers sent reports to the Ordnance Survey Office in Dublin, passing on information which they collected during the compilation of data for the first Ordnance Survey maps. In Clare this work was undertaken by the renowned John O'Donovan and Eugene Curry. In their 1839 *Ordnance Survey Letters*, they noted the main features of each area of Clare. Writing about Killilagh they stated:

In this Parish are three old Castles, one in the townland of Doonagore which was lately repaired by Counsellor Gore from whose ancestors it is now erroneously supposed to have derived its name. This Castle is mentioned in the List of the Castles of Thomond preserved in Trinity College as belonging to Sir Donnell O'Brien. The second, in the Townland of Dunwicfelim, which is mentioned in the aforesaid List as belonging to Tege Mac Murrough (O'Brien) and the third in the Townland of Ballynalacken, which is mentioned in the List as belonging to the same Tege.

Thus, the three extant castles listed at the time were Doonagore, Doonmacfelim and Ballinalacken, and as a result, these are the three castles shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of Ireland. However, their list omits mention of Knockfin Castle which was possibly at the site of the present Catholic Chapel, and Toomullin Castle, which was possibly located close to Toomullin Church. In 1910, R.W. Twigge provided a transcription of Edward White's 1574 description of Clare, which lists five Castles in Doolin. Martin Breen, in 1995, in analysing an earlier 1570 list of 125 castles in Clare identifies the same five fortifications, and comments on their modern day condition.

Present day name & condition (Breen, 1995)	Description in 1570 (Breen, 1995)	White's 1574 Description (Twigge, 1910)
Doonagore Perfect, recently restored, inhabited periodically, round castle	Downgore sir Donill o bryen	Dunegeoir Sr. Donnell Obrien
Doonmacfelim Ground floor remains, vaulted ceiling, secret lock-up chamber within south wall	Downevicfelim Tirrelagh o bryen	Dunmycphellem Tege mcMurrough
Toomullin Site not known, corbels and cut stone in field walls at Toomullin	Tomeleny hugh mac clanchy upon Sir Donill o bryen	Tuomolyn Connoghor Maglanchy
Knockfin Possible site at Knockfin Cross, 2 corbels on site	Cnockfine mac clanchy a brehon	Knockfyne Tege mcMurrough
Ballinalacken Almost perfect	Ballinelakin Sir Donill o bryen	Ballenelakyn Tege mcMurrough

Doonagore Castle

Ironically, the highly iconic Doonagore Castle was neither built of Doonagore Stone, nor was it built by the Gore family. A castle was built at this site by Teigue MacTurlough MacCon O'Connor in the fourteenth century, but the current circular building is estimated to be from the middle of the sixteenth century. It is built of stone from a quarry at nearby Trá Leachain. The name of the castle and townland may mean 'fort of the rounded hills' or 'fort of the goats'.

Similar to most castles in this district, Doonagore changed ownership through the various trials and tribulations of local and national history. It was owned by the O'Briens, then the O'Connors. It was seized by the crown and re granted to Turlough O'Brien in 1582. Soon after that it was occupied

‘Galway Bay from Donagore’

© Image Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (Ref: L_CAB_06223)



by the MacClancy family and in September 1588 it was here or at nearby Cnocán an Crochaire that Spanish Armada prisoners were hanged. In the 17th or early 18th century it was in the possession of the Gore family and Counsellor Gore repaired it in the early 1800's but by 1837 it had fallen into disrepair and was described in that year as being a round tower on a square base.

It was fully restored in the 1970's for an Irish American by the name of Gorman, whose family still own it. The castle and the Radio na Gaeltachta transmitter, on the hillside above it are used as navigational points by boatmen bringing their crafts into Doolin pier.

Doonagore Castle, 2020



Doonmacfelim Castle

Doonmacfelim (called Dunwicfelim by O'Donovan and Curry in 1839), is a tower house from the late 15th or early 16th century. Having originally belonged to O'Brien, after the Cromwellian settlement it passed to John Fitzgerald.

I can find absolutely no evidence to support the following information about a 'St. Brendan's Well', near Doonmacfelim Castle, which my brother Thomas documented in his Folklore Commission copybook on 2-12-1937. In this case, the source of the story was my mother, Brigid Griffin (35), Ballyvara, Doolin, I'm hardly going to doubt my own mother!

St Brendan was a great Irish Saint, and he travelled all over Ireland. Once when he was going to Aran he lay down to rest near the old castle. He fell asleep and when he awoke he made a well where he slept and he told the people of Fisherstreet that the water of this well would cure warts.

This well is situated to the north of the castle of Doonmacphelim. The prayers said at this well are five Our Fathers, five Hail Marys and five Glorias.

Doonmacfelim Castle, 1842. © OSI Ireland
(Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Doonmacfelim Castle
(photo by Frank Moloney)



Ballinalacken Castle

Ballinalacken castle overlooks the sea from an impressive cliff-top site. It is likely that this was the location of a much older fortification, as the current building only dates to about the 15th Century. The name seems to derive from Baile na Leachan (town of the flagstones / tombstones / stones) or Béal Áth na Leacha (ford-mouth of

Ballinalacken Castle, 1842. © OSI Ireland
(Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Ballinalacken Castle and House

© National Library of Ireland Ref: L_CAB_00927



the flagstones). In the late 14th century, Lochlan MacCon O'Connor reportedly built a fortress at the site. In a way the current tower house resembles Leamaneh Castle which was also constructed over a prolonged period, and reflects a variety of architectural influences.

Ballinalacken Castle



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ballinalacken_castle.jpg

Toomullin Castle

Toomullin Castle was the property of Conogher (Conor) MacClancy (or sometimes McClancy, MacGlanchy) and Hugh MacClancy in the middle of the 15th century. These were the ancestors of the infamous Boetius Clancy. Nothing is certain about the location or structure of Toomullin Castle but, there is evidence of Toomullin House and also the foundations of a very solid structure, possibly the castle, in Toomullin townland. However, alternatively, it is thought that this could be the foundations of a limekiln.

Toomullin Castle? 2020

This solid stone ruin could be the foundation of Toomullin Castle or perhaps a limekiln



Knockfin Castle

The famous MacClancy Law School is thought to have been located at the site now occupied by the Church of the Holy Rosary. It is also suggested that this was where Knockfin Castle once stood. Boetius Clancy High Sheriff of Clare, owned Knockfin Castle in 1580 and in contrast to his various atrocities in relation to the Spanish Armada, he had a beautiful table made from

timber from an Armada ship. This three-meter-long table, was once described by the Knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald, as ‘one of the most important and earliest pieces of Irish furniture’. The table, which stood in Bunratty Castle from 1962 was bought by an Irish purchaser for €360,000 when Lord Inchiquin sold it in October 2018. As far as we know, this may be the only surviving relic of Knockfin Castle.

16th Century Armada Table (Overall Table and detail of carving on leg - Adam’s, 2018)



“Roadford, Moher, Co. Clare”

© National Library of Ireland Ref: L_ROY_04125

Note the bare landscape and Killilagh Church in the background.



Big Houses

My reason for singling out a number of the old houses of Doolin is that they were important landmarks of my youth, or the homes of people who are discussed throughout this book. The owners of these houses have left their mark on the parish, and their lives are bound up with the history of Killilagh. Many notes in this section are taken from *Houses of Clare* by Dr. Hugh W.L. Weir.

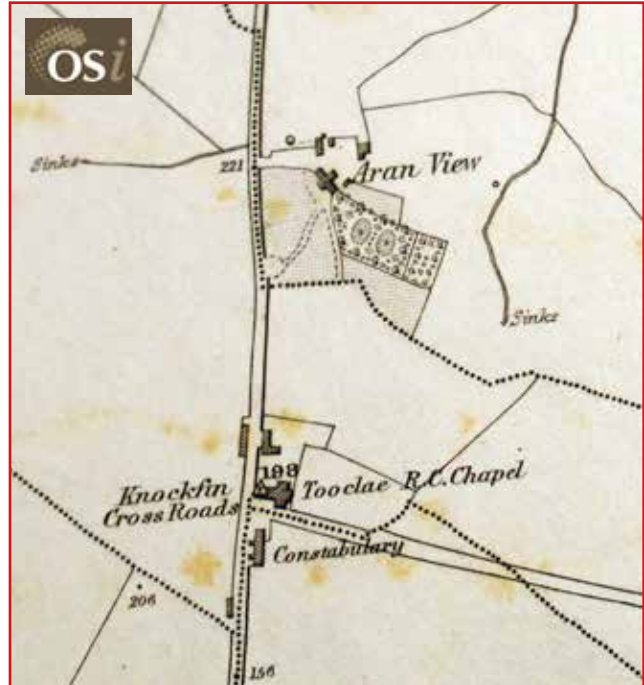
Aran View

This house was owned by different families through time. The original house was built by the Macnamaras, and in 1837 was owned by Francis Macnamara. Later it was owned by Johnstone or Johnston and then Linnane. In 1878 the house with its 1,431 acres of land was owned by Robert Johnston who was a Justice of the Peace. The last male member of this family married a Miss O'Flaherty of the Aran Islands. She had inherited gold and silver ornaments, which were saved from one of the wrecks of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and these were to be seen at Aran View. Later the family moved to the Aran Islands.

Aran View is situated in the townland of Glasha Beg, and is still standing, having been restored and greatly extended in recent times. In 1841 it was described as a two-storey house with three bays and a small two storey addition to the west. It has a magnificent view of the Aran Islands.

Aran View House (& 'Tooclae' Church), 1842

© OSI Ireland (Permit No. MP 003720)
& Russell Library Maynooth



Aran View House, 2020

Now Aran View Hotel.



Impressive Gateway to Aughavoher House, 2020



Aughavoher House

This house has now disappeared, leaving only a few walls, the original entrance piers and a couple of outhouses still standing. It is to the left on the Fisherstreet / Doolin Pier road, very near the pier, and is associated with the Gore, Macnamara and O'Connor families. It is in the townland of Ballaghaline.

Originally built in the late 18th century or early 19th century, this was a one storey house facing south with yards and coach houses surrounded by high walls. In 1847 the house was the summer residence of F. Gore Esq. of Derrymore. By 1855 his grandson, General Edward Arthur Gore

J.P. was the owner. He married Anna Josephine Cochrane of Dublin. At this time the farm of 182 acres was leased to James Nagle. The house stood on four acres, and passed from General Gore to his son, Reginald Edward Gore, a naval lieutenant. It was still standing up to at least the 1930's and was known locally as General Gore's House.

Ballinalacken House

This house is associated with the O'Brien and the O'Callaghan families. It is situated on the Lisdoonvarna / Black Head coast road about 4km from Lisdoonvarna. The house is nicely set off by many trees (an unusual feature in this windswept part of North Clare), and it is used now as a hotel (see Lawrence Collection photo of Ballinalacken Castle, which also includes Ballinalacken House). It is in good repair and still has its original gateway. Dr. Hugh Weir describes it as follows:

It is a graceful, large, nineteenth-century, single storey, three bay, hip-roofed and slated house over a basement, facing west towards Galway Bay.

The house has been enlarged and changed a good deal, over the years. The castle, beside the house is also in good repair.

Aughavoher House, 1842. © OSI Ireland
(Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Bridge over Aille River near 'Fitz's Cross', 2020



Castle View

Castle View is associated with the Nagle family, who still own it and its surrounding land. It is situated in the townland of Doonagore, about half a kilometre from Fisherstreet on the road to Doonagore Castle. The house has many outhouses and sheds which are still used for farming. This is a nineteenth-century two storey house facing south east with a two-storey addition as well as a one storey addition used as living accommodation. The house was built in 1837 by Michael Nagle, and in 1855 the 373 acres of farmland were farmed by a James Nagle.

The Nagles are an old Anglo-Norman family and according to Hugh Weir, it is likely that the forebears of the present family were settled in

Clare in the 17th century. It is on their land that the O'Connor and O'Brien Doonagore Castle stands, which was bought and restored by an O'Gorman couple from America in the mid-twentieth century. The current generation of Nagles are still active in the area, and nowadays run a busy campsite down beside Doolin Pier.

St Catherine's

Marked on the first Ordnance Survey map as Gortaclob House and on the later 25-inch edition as St. Catherine's, this house was occupied by Francis Macnamara Calcutt in the mid 19th century, valued at over £20 and held by him in fee. It is now no longer extant. It is difficult to know if this house is linked to the nunnery of St. Catherine's which is described as a comparatively modern building which 'lay to the north of Cnocan an Chrochaire'.

St Catherine's was a mysterious establishment for us as children. While Catherine, Kathy, Kathleen and Cáit were all great names in Doolin at one time, nobody seems to know anything about who the nuns were or where they came out of. In fact, information is very limited about the convent, 'a recent establishment', which is now gone.

Castle View from Doonagore, 2020



Doolin Castle (House), 1842

© OSI Ireland (Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Doolin Castle / House

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows Doolin Castle, just to the north of Fisherstreet. This is really Doolin House which was a property of the Macnamaras. It was probably their main residence in the 19th century, but, by the early 20th century it was being used as a summer home. Before Henry Vee Macnamara left Clare in 1922, Doolin House had been maliciously burned down. It is said that the stones of the house were taken by locals as construction material and some time later, the Land Commission redistributed the land.

Interesting Wall Feature near Doolin House, 2020

A range of ruined buildings and other structures survive in the area of Doolin House. From analysis of maps, this 'tower' seems to be a decorative feature, which may have formed part of a wall around the walled garden



The destruction of Doolin House is a conundrum - it seems that it was burned down by British forces. This is quite incredulous since it belonged to a Unionist, and not just any Unionist, but the High Sheriff of Clare, Henry Vee Macnamara. Furthermore, the building appears to have been used occasionally as an RIC barracks. It is thought that the malicious burning may have been undertaken in retaliation for IRA attacks in the area. However, there is some logic to this, as the house was regularly used by Henry's son Francis, who was a Protestant Sinn Féiner. In a report by the RIC for May 1921 the following is recorded:

*Communication to the Inspector General & H.V. McNamara 19/20:5:21 - On date stated Doolin Vacated RIC Bks were maliciously burned.**

A further comment is contained in the June report by the RIC County inspector - this glosses over the any blame for the burning by stating:

The residences of five country gentlemen were destroyed by fire last month. These gentlemen are all loyalists.

* We offer our sincere gratitude to Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc for being so helpful in providing RIC reports on the burning of Doolin House. Even with archival material the facts around this event are still not entirely clear.

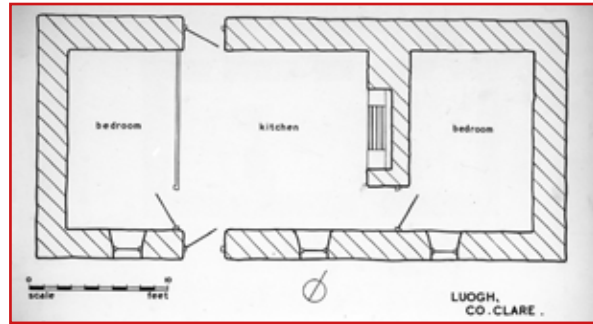
‘Vernacular’ Houses

Traditional houses in Ireland range from substantial dwellings of the well-off farmer or landlord, to the modest labourers’ cottage. Modern architect, engineer or technician designed buildings (O’Reilly, 2011) have now replaced the ‘vernacular’ designs which were deep-rooted in tradition. In the not too distant past, the majority of the population lived in houses they built themselves with the help of family and neighbours. Aalen (1966) suggests that all of these ‘vernacular’ houses follow a simple basic pattern:

Small thatched houses, one storey high, oblong in plan and never more than one room in width, are the type of dwelling traditionally used by the great bulk of the rural population in all parts of Ireland (Aalen, 1966:47).

Kevin Danaher (1972) agreed that all ‘vernacular’ houses in Ireland follow this simple form – a rectangular structure, pierced in one side by a door, and a fire in the middle of the floor. He suggests that historically, all would have had a hipped roof (Aalen, 1966; Loftus, 2011), however, due to the availability of materials, and in response to

Layout of House at Luogh, 1935
© The Irish Folklore Commission



weather and climate there are regional variations. The patterns of these houses were not written down anywhere, but passed on from generation to generation.

Aalen (1966) points out two features which differentiate the distinct styles – the position of the fire - either a central-hearth or a gable-hearth and the roof shape – hipped or gabled. Further distinctions include direct-entry houses, where the door led directly into the house / hearth, and those which are classified as ‘lobby-entry’ houses. In places where the walls were made of mud and clay, the roof typically remained ‘hipped’, whereas in Clare, where stone was plentiful, a gable provided more strength to the overall structure. In Doolin, a further modification, which

House at Luogh photographed by Kevin Dannagher 1945 © The Irish Folklore Commission
The design of this particular house is incredibly like the house in Ballyvara where I grew up





95:25: 2. Stephen Helery's house.

is noted by those who research vernacular houses was the practice of 'roping' the roof, to protect the thatch from the wild storms coming in off the Atlantic Ocean. O'Reilly (2007) in an extensive analysis of vernacular houses notes all sorts of features such as the fact that windows were small

to minimise the weakening of walls, lots of houses had half doors, to regulate air and keep children in and animals out of the kitchen (or sometimes vice-versa). In all cases, the kitchen was an extension of the farm and typically the largest room - the hub of all domestic activity.

Thatched House near Doonagore Cross, 2020



Houses at Luogh with Inis Oírr (Aran) in the Background 1955 © The Irish Folklore Commission



House at Doonagore 1945 © The Irish Folklore Commission



Thatchers at work on the house of P. Ó Flannagáin, Doolin 1935 © The Irish Folklore Commission



Fisherstreet 1935 © The Irish Folklore Commission



Killilagh and National Historical Events

The Great Famine

Many calamities have struck the people of Ireland over the centuries, but by far the most disastrous was the great Famine of 1845–1848. Other crises such as plagues, plantations and wars hurt people deeply, but the great famine hit the population of the entire country. It affected all, but especially the poor, whose staple diet was the potato. As has been pointed out by many historians and experts, the most unforgivable aspect of the situation was that while people were dying from hunger by the thousands, shiploads of corn were being exported to pay the landlords' rent.

There were many famines in Ireland, but what made the Great Famine so lethal was the failure of the potato crop over three consecutive years, 1845-1848. People might have survived one year's hunger, but when the famine continued on into the second and third years, they were unable to cope with the loss of their staple food.

The Great Famine in Killilagh.

One small advantage that Killilagh had in famine times was its location beside the sea. Some seafood was available, but this was not sufficient to make a large difference, and fish, shellfish, seagrass, sleamhacáun, carraigín etc. was no substitute for a balanced diet. In recent years in Cronagort West people have found unusually large mounds of bairneach shells, which might indicate a more than usual dependence on these shellfish during Famine times.

The table on the following pages presents an analysis of the effects of the Famine on the Parish of Killilagh. In it we compare the population for 1841, just before the Famine with that of 1851 and 1861 after the Famine. It is clear that the

whole parish suffered greatly, and those who lived through it never forgot the trauma of seeing their friends and neighbours – likely many of their own families - die of starvation. A man from Tipperary told me once that he remembered a very old woman in his youth, who lived in constant fear that another famine might happen. She carried this terrible dread with her throughout her life. That was the mark the famine left on those who witnessed it. And yet, stories of the Famine did not figure largely in the folklore of our parish of Killilagh in my youth; despite the area being noted for its richness and wealth of folklore in very many other subjects. Killilagh was not saved from the famine and one can only guess that those who suffered deeply were slow to talk about this trauma, which went so very deep with them.

While there has been some doubt cast on the accuracy of the 1841 census, it was the first such activity to be undertaken by members of the Irish Constabulary, rather than civilian enumerators. There are some questionable statistics, such as in Toomullin, for example, where the population is recorded in 1841 as being 25, with only one house. This is a doubtful number for one house, but, even if there are some errors in recording, the overall picture is indicative of the population. The numbers show a decrease in population from 3,904 to 2,739 in the famine decade, and a decrease in the number of houses from 590 to 420 in the same period. This means the parish lost 1,165 of its population and 170 houses at that time. The total figure shows a loss of 30% of the population in the years 1841-1851. Comparing the 1861 figures with those of 1841, there is a further 9% loss.

Of the 45 townlands recorded, a small number (7) gained in population, some significantly, from 1841-1851, these were Doolin (up 14%), Carnane (up 43%), Ballycahane (up 82%), Ballaghaline (up 30%), Ardeamush (up 6%), Lurrage (up 7%)

Townland	Area (Acres)		1841	1851	1861	1841- 1851
Ardeamush	163	Pop.	49	52	49	6%
		Houses	9	9	9	
Aughavinna	71	Pop.	49	34	30	-31%
		Houses	9	5	4	
Aughiska Beg	264	Pop.	29	14	11	-52%
		Houses	5	2	2	
Aughiska Mor	310	Pop.	65	23	30	-65%
		Houses	9	4	4	
Ballaghaline	186	Pop.	10	13	17	30%
		Houses	1	2	2	
Ballycahan	141	Pop.	9	33	12	82%
		Houses	2	6	1	
Ballycullaun	101	Pop.	69	35	16	-49%
		Houses	12	7	4	
Ballynahoun	1011	Pop.	209	177	142	-15%
		Houses	32	31	24	
Ballynalacken	340	Pop.	120	94	81	-22%
		Houses	18	15	12	
Ballyryan	594	Pop.	---	6	10	---
		Houses	---	1	2	
Ballysalagh	150	Pop.	89	52	48	-42%
		Houses	12	8	7	
Ballyvara	204	Pop.	147	99	109	-33%
		Houses	25	17	20	
Ballyvoe	246	Pop.	40	7	17	-83%
		Houses	7	1	3	
Boherboy	325	Pop.	71	19	21	-73%
		Houses	11	3	4	
Caherkinallia	284	Pop.	37	27	31	-27%
		Houses	6	3	5	
Cahermaclanchy	227	Pop.	27	27	20	---
		Houses	5	8	3	
Cahermcrusheen	168	Pop.	38	22	34	-42%
		Houses	6	5	4	
Carnane	638	Pop.	130	186	140	43%
		Houses	21	26	25	
Carrownycleary	97	Pop.	94	63	19	-42%
		Houses	15	9	3	
Cloughaun	331	Pop.	101	60	81	-41%
		Houses	18	14	14	
Coogyulla	151	Pop.	43	11	13	-74%
		Houses	7	2	2	
Craggycorraddane	207	Pop.	64	52	32	-19%
		Houses	12	10	5	
Craggycorraddan E	77	Pop.	59	19	22	-68%
		Houses	10	3	5	
Cronogort E.	252	Pop.	82	68	77	-19%
		Houses	16	11	14	
Cronogort W.	237	Pop.	77	55	45	-29%
		Houses	16	11	8	

Townland	Area (Acres)		1841	1851	1861	1841- 1851
Doolin	238	Pop.	57	65	56	14%
		Houses	8	9	11	
Doonmacfelim	186	Pop.	--	21	--	---
		Houses	--	--	--	
Doonagore	619	Pop.	146	90	70	-38%
		Houses	22	14	9	
Glasha Beg	281	Pop.	84	62	44	-26%
		Houses	11	8	6	
Glasha Mor	252	Pop.	84	62	41	-26%
		Houses	13	7	6	
Gortaclob	174	Pop.	94	19	33	-80%
		Houses	15	3	4	
Island	76	Pop.	32	22	18	-31%
		Houses	5	3	2	
Killilagh	95	Pop.	--	--	--	---
		Houses	--	--	--	
Knockacarn	93	Pop.	68	24	31	-65%
		Houses	9	5	5	
Knockaguilla	288	Pop.	155	107	96	-31%
		Houses	29	15	13	
Knocknaranhy	203	Pop.	115	43	47	-63%
		Houses	19	6	6	
Lacht Murreda	310	Pop.	32	24	20	-25%
		Houses	5	4	4	
Luogh North	611	Pop.	262	117	194	-55%
		Houses	47	20	29	
Luogh South	457	Pop.	96	158	86	65%
		Houses	17	24	13	
Lurraga	115	Pop.	46	49	13	7%
		Houses	8	7	2	
Oughdarra	289	Pop.	40	33	28	-18%
		Houses	6	7	7	
Polluiskaboy	62	Pop.	14	5	6	-64%
		Houses	2	2	1	
Poulnagun	477	Pop.	184	152	132	-17%
		Houses	32	28	22	
Teergonean	318	Pop.	210	172?	147	-18%
		Houses	39	28	30	
Toomullin	127	Pop.	25	12?	42	-52%
		Houses	1	4	6	
Toornahooan	160	Pop.	93	41	28	-56%
		Houses	18	10	7	
Crab Island	1	Pop.		--	--	----
		Houses		--	--	
Fisherstreet		Pop.	227	190	148	-22%
		Houses	35	25	28	
Roadford		Pop.	126			
		Houses	23			
Total:	12357	Pop.	3,904	2,739	2,377	-30%
		Houses	648	445	396	

and Luogh South (up 65%). The cause of this contradictory trend in famine times is unclear. One wonders why Luogh South should increase in population as Luogh North was decreasing at an almost equal rate.

The general impression given is that there seemed to have been an uneasy shift of population throughout the whole parish, apart altogether from the several hundred deaths and emigration. It is notable too that the decline in population did not cease after famine times, but continued for many years to come. The famine seems to have been the event which triggered the great movement of diaspora which we have seen to very recent times. Thanks to the Celtic Tiger, and more recent trends this seems to have stopped and we now see lots of new houses in Doolin and overall immigration into Ireland.

The following letter (published in *Dal gCais*, Vol 7 by M. Coen, 1984, p25) from the then Parish Priest, Fr. Fallon† to the Chief Secretary in Dublin on October 5th 1846 describes the plight of the people of Killilagh during the Famine:

The potato has failed; we are expecting pestilence – it has already set in; no employment for 4-5,000 people in my parish; not 30 persons in constant employment; no depot. Huxters selling Indian corn at 1/10 to 2/- per stone of 14 pounds, a good example of Government protection of the traders.

My people are starving. I expect every hour infractions of the law in disregard of the rights of property – The cattle (and there are considerable grassing tracts in these parishes) will be slaughtered and carried away to ward off death and hunger. Some have said that they would prefer to be shot by military while taking

away from extreme necessity than die the cruel death of starvation. Employment is at once necessary. Let the work be productive or unproductive or anything else that speculators or theorizers may please to call them, let us have them at all hazards and thus avoid death in a Christian country teeming with abundance of all kinds of eatables except the potato the wretched staple of the worst fed peasants in Europe or perhaps in the world.

*P. Fallon P.P. Killilagh, Kilmoon and
Kilinney*

The intensity of the impact which the Famine had on Killilagh is also noted by Larkin and McGrath (1944):

There is a children's graveyard beside the ruined church in Oughtdara. I have been told that in opening the graves here people have found bones of grown-up people. I was informed by one person that he often heard his grandmother speak of seeing a woman carrying on her back the dead body of her grown-up son for burial there during the famine period. She wished to keep the fact of his death secret for a few days as two pounds of meal were due to her that weekend. But when she went to get her two pounds of meal, her son's death had been reported and thus she only got her own ration.

† The Same Patrick Fallon was later the Last Bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora from 1853 to 1866, after which that dioceses was administered by and later united with the Dioceses of Galway.

Land Agitation – The Doolin Cattle Drive

The Clare County Library website, under the category of ‘local songs’ provides the lyrics of a piece called ‘The Cattle Drive of Doolin’. The text was provided by none other than Doolin man Micho Russell:

*In the last days of September
When our boys were sent to jail
They marched them to the station-house
And sent them off by rail.
The bobbies who escorted them
Were itching for a row
For nothing irritated them
But the How! How! How!
The peelers started charging
And the boys were flinging stones
Harrison got frightened
And shouted out to Holmes:
I think we’re mistaken
In kicking up this row
For they’ll drive us like the bullocks
With their How! How! How!
Long life to you O’Brien
Your’re locked in prison cell
To your loyal comrades
History will tell.
With courage bold they did their work
And manfully were seen
That day in Ennistymon
When we unfurled the flag of green.*

So, what is a ‘cattle drive’ and what is the significance of the Doolin Cattle Drive? The following account of this event draws heavily on a newspaper article which I cut out many years ago called ‘The Doolin Cattle Drive’ by a C.T. O CEIRIN. Sadly, I recorded neither the date or the name of the paper. I assume the author was the very talented Cyril Ó Céirín, teacher, journalist, author, local historian and activist, who lived the latter years of his interesting and varied life with his wife Kit, in Lisdoonvarna, his ancestral homeplace.

From the last decade of the 19th century, the ‘land question’ preoccupied political affairs in Ireland. Demand for fair rent, fixity of tenure, and freedom of sale, followed by demands for meaningful land reform had been exacerbated by the Great Famine. Various attempts were made by the British Parliament to satisfy the Irish, beginning with the 1849 Encumbered Estates Act, followed by further developments in the 1860s and 1880s. But, the Irish tenantry still agitated in the form of boycotts and violent outbursts. The Land Acts of 1903 and 1909 were hugely important and led to many landlords selling their estates to their tenants, motivated by generous government incentives. However, between Doolin and Ennistymon, the Macnamaras owned vast areas of land, and were among the landlords who could afford to ignore the new measures. Instead, they rented their lands to ‘graziers’. According to Ó Ceirín (ND),

they rented their land at Doolin to several graziers, mostly retired high-ranking officers of the British Army [who] farmed upwards of 1,000 head of cattle.

In retaliation to Macnamara’s refusal to sell his land to his tenants, on 22nd September 1908, the local population undertook a daring and clever act of protest ‘in broad daylight’. The plan was to drive the vast herds of cattle to their owners’ residences, in an act of defiance. Ó Ceirín poetically describes the event:

*At dawn, men with flushed, dark faces,
burst through the fields and began driving
the beasts up the white road which threaded
its way from the sea into Lisdoonvarna.
My father vividly recalls his child’s
astonishment at the dust clouded spectacle
and the excitement of the womenfolk,
running to doors and gateways. All the
bright morning, it seemed to him, the herd
kept passing along the road to Kilfenora,
the air full of their trampling and the wild
“how! how! how!” of the drivers.*

Outside Kilfenora a police sergeant was waiting for the agitators with his troops, but the enthusiasm of the Clare men was not to be dampened:

With a wild shout, one Willie Hillary, they say, sprang up on the wall of bullocks, ran along the backs of the milling beasts and, leaping down before the sergeant, 'didn't he only, man, take him by the belt and the seat of his trousers and threw him in over the wall'. The herds moved on.

This was a highly successful 'show of force' and subsequently, no cattle were brought back to Doolin. Because there was no bloodshed, and in fact no cattle had been stolen, the penalties received by the forty people who were prosecuted were relatively light. The song above by Micho Russell refers to the riots which took place during the ensuing court case:

Priests, urging an orderly protest, moved among the huge crowd gathered outside. Later, with only cries of 'how! how! how!' as provocation, District Inspector Harrison ordered a baton-charge. Ash-plants and hurleys routed the police and Harrison himself was badly used before the clergy brought about a calm. Steps were already being taken to divide the land; the people had won.

The government seems to have been seriously concerned with the issue of 'cattle-driving' and put measures in place to prevent further occurrences. The following is reported in *The London Times* on October 5 1908:

Within the past week 85 extra policemen have been drafted into County Clare in consequence of the renewed outbreak of cattle-driving. The majority of them are stationed for the present in Doolin-house, and it is intended to form 'posts' at Kilfenora, where there is already a constabulary barracks, and at Kinlon-House the residence of Mr. James Griffin, who was recently fired upon when returning to his home. Special

transport cars have also been sent from the depot in Dublin and a mounted constable has been added to the staff at Lisdoonvarna. Since the prosecutions and the rioting which took place on Wednesday, the district around Lisdoonvarna has been in a state of excitement.

Such was the impact of this event, that it was discussed in the House of Commons on 4th November 1908 by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Augustine Birrell during 'Questions in the House'. Birrell stated that

Forty-four persons were made amenable for cattle-driving, of whom two gave bail and the remainder underwent a fortnight's imprisonment in default of bail (Hansard, 1908).

The topic of 'cattle drives' in Ireland was discussed many times in the House of Commons and House of Lords in the first decade of the 20th century. For example on 18th March 1909 a lengthy discussion took place in the House of Lords and the inference by some of the 'Lords' in the ensuing (rather confusing) debate was that 'agitation is not being run by the poor man who wants land, but by the rich man who is greedy' (Hansard, 2009). Of course, if that was indeed the case, it would absolve the British Government from any responsibility to the 'poor'. According to the detail provided, there had been something in the region of a thousand Cattle drives across Ireland in previous years and 75 such events in November 2008 alone.

A further act of 'protest' was the illegal occupation of the landlord's property. Campbell and Varley (2016, pp. 128-129) highlight the case of H.V. Macnamara, whose 1,000 acres in Doolin were being used by 37 people in commonage in 1923, after the land had been cleared. This group were grazing 18 horses, 55 cattle and 101 sheep, without the permission of the owner. The occupants were 'in very poor circumstances' and

were either fishermen or farmers, who were trying to survive on 10-20 acres of land. These people were evicted by the Special Infantry Corps in July and December 1923, and again in May 1924. On the latter two occasions, their stock was seized and released on payment of a fine ‘under great protest’.

I met an O’Donoghoe woman in recent years, who was from Gortaclob, beside Canavans of St. Catherines. She was a great friend of my sister Annie. She told me that her father was involved in the original Doolin Cattle Drive and he spent time in jail because of it.

This kind of activity wasn’t just confined to the early part of the century. I remember myself being at home in what I believe was 1942 and one night there was a big fuss in the house. My mother and father were talking and there were quite a few people around the place. They went out to the back street (which is what we called the ‘yard’ in those days). We were full of wonder and mischief wondering what was going on. We could hear a rattle bang of stone walls falling. They were the stone walls of the estate that belonged to the landlord over behind Fisherstreet. The ‘Boys’ were out knocking walls and giving a warning to the landlord who farmed that land. I’m not sure if my older brothers were involved, but I remember my parents in half secret, using the term ‘the boys’. That event took place in the fields adjoining the land we had up in ‘the Mock’.

The area we called ‘the Mock’ is in Doonmacfelim townland, where large fields behind Fisherstreet and Doonmacfelim castle were subdivided into strips of land, each containing about an acre, which was allocated to people such as ourselves. This was terrific land where we tilled potatoes and corn.

The 1901 Census

Developments with the World Wide Web and the Internet have made some fantastic resources available to us all in the comfort of our own homes. As I tidy up the chapters of this book I can check details in Lewis’ 1837 *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, of which all 1400 pages are online and searchable; I can look at *First Edition Ordnance Survey Maps* (see <https://www.osi.ie/products/professional-mapping/historical-mapping/>) to examine the landscape in the 1840s, and; can check details in the 1901 and 1911 *Census of Ireland*, which the National Archives has published in full (see www.census.nationalarchives.ie/). These are phenomenal resources for anyone interested in researching people and places in Ireland. Some time ago, I asked my son Brendan to have a look and see what he could make of the 1901 census data for Killilagh. He put great energy into the task and the following is some of his analysis of the information that is freely available online for all to view.

Killilagh is one of 46 Parishes in the county of Clare. The parish consists of 46 townlands spread over 3 Electoral Divisions. Census information is provided in 14 different categories:

Categories of Data in 1901 Census	
1. District Electoral Division	2. Townland
3. Surname	4. Christian (First) Name
5. Relation to head of family	6. Religious Profession
7. Education (Literacy)	8. Age (in years)
9. Sex (Male/Female)	10. Rank Profession or Occupation
11. Marriage (Marital status)	12. Where born (County)
13. Irish language. a. Irish (meaning no English) b. Irish & English c. Left blank which means English only	14. Disability status. Namely: a. Deaf and Dumb b. Dumb only c. Blind d. Imbecile or Idiot e. Lunatic

In 1901 there were 1759 people in the Parish. The distribution between the three District Electoral Divisions was Cloghaun: 391; Killilagh: 1048; Luraga: 320.

Households

There were 321 households in the Parish‡. 202 women were listed as ‘Wife’. In total there were 1697 people who can be considered as family members by blood or marriage.

- There were 984 children§ in the Parish, of these 5 were step children.
- There were 23 instances of in-law children living with the head of the family (18 daughters-in-law, 5 sons-in-law).
- There were 34 siblings (19 Brother and 15 Sister) indicating a practice of people staying ‘in the home place’.
- There were 30 parents listed and 11 parents-in-law (mother-in-law, father-in-law). There is only one grand parent of the ‘head of the house’ listed (Age 90).
- There were 5 instances of in-law siblings (Brother / Sister) living with the head of the household.
- There were 3 parent’s siblings.
- There were 38 instances of people one step removed from the family i.e. cousins, nephews, nieces and one niece-in-law.
- There was only one person listed as living alone. This suggests a practice of families caring for older / unmarried family members.

Of the non-family members present during the census the breakdown is as follows:

- 25 servants (including one apprentice).
- 2 lodgers and 20 boarders (difference unclear).
- 7 Visitors (2 from other counties).

The RIC Barracks is categorised separately. There were 5 constables and 1 sergeant. 2 of these were married and their families may be included in the general population.

Religion

The vast majority of people (1746) indicated that they were Roman Catholic with a small number declaring as Protestant (7). Of these, 3 indicated Church of England (all were from England or Wales) and 4 indicated Church of Ireland. 3 people left the entry blank with a further 3 either refusing to give details or giving an evasive answer.

Gender

In total there were 800 females and 959 males. The following are the listed roles of women in the household:

- 64 females are listed as head of family, which breaks down into 5 married, 5 unmarried and 54 widows.
- There was a total of 202 women listed as Wife.
- 396 females were children with 22 grandchildren - of the female grandchildren living in households all were non-married..
- 10 women were classified as servants, none of whom were married.
- 5 women were listed as lodgers; 1 was married, with the remaining 4 being widowed.
- 36 female parents or parents-in-law are listed. Only 2 of these were married with the remainder being widows. This suggests a practice of caring for elderly relatives.
- 15 siblings were listed. Of these 14 were not married.
- 20 are related but 1 step removed from the head of the family (see above for definition).

‡ Number of families is derived from the number of people identified as being a head of family. Where the term ‘Wife’ has been used this will be taken to indicate that there is a living husband (Who is already included under Head of Household)

§ The term ‘child’ should not be considered as an indicator of age

Role of males in the household:

- 257 men are listed as head of family; of these, 201 were married, 24 were not married and 32 were widowed. There was a smaller number of male widowers than female widows.
- 588 children were male with 19 of these married. There were 27 male grandchildren, none of whom were married.
- 13 males were one step removed and 15 were servants, none of whom were married.

Marital Status

The marital status identifies that 465 persons were married (232 couples); 1148 were not married (462 female and 685 males); 96 were female widows and 38 were male widowers. The marital status for 11 people was left blank or was crossed out.

Names

The most common surnames in the Parish were O'Connor (107); Shannon (74); Flanagan (62) and Mc Mahon (56). The frequency with which surnames and Christian names were repeatedly used indicates why so many people were known by 'nicknames', to allow for some form of unique identification. The most common Christian names in the parish for women were Mary (176); Bridget (142) and Margaret (68). The most common names for Men were John (175), Michael (162), Patrick (132) and Thomas (113).

Education (Literacy)

The literacy levels were as follows: 1062 people could read and write (60%), while 691 people (39.28%) had some form of literacy related issues. Classification may be a problem here. 132 could read but not write (7.5%), while 559 people could be classified as illiterate (31.78%) - 450 could not read; 98 were not able to read or write; 11 could not write.

Various factors affected literacy. The first of these was use of the Irish Language. Native Irish speakers may have experienced difficulties with written English which was their second language. Viewed in this light the figures break down as follows:

- 292 people did not fill in the Irish language section which suggests they were entirely English speaking. Of these, 108 could read and write, 155 were classified as illiterate with a further 27 only able to read.
- Of the 35 people in the Parish who only spoke Irish, 33 were classified as illiterate.
- Of those who spoke both English and Irish (1309) 877 could read and write (67%) with a further 98 (7.49%) able to read; 25.52% of these were illiterate.
- Of those who spoke English only (119) 75 could read and write (63.03%) with a further 5.88% able to read; 37 (31.09%) were classified as illiterate.

Perhaps an understanding of the English language was a factor in the literacy levels of the population. This link was probably a factor in the subsequent decline of the language.

Age Group	Number of People	Read & Write	Read not Write
Less than 10 yrs	336	29.61%	14.50%
10 to less than 20	395	86.08%	8.86%
20 to less than 30	296	80.74%	7.43%
30 to less than 40	165	73.33%	6.06%
40 to less than 50	158	70.25%	6.33%
50 to less than 60	138	56.52%	5.80%
60 to less than 70	113	33.63%	4.42%
70 to less than 80	71	30.99%	5.63%
80 to less than 90	34	14.71%	0.00%
90 to less than 100	6	0.00%	16.67%

Gender doesn't seem to have been highly important as a factor in literacy, as 60.63% of women and 60.17% of men could read and write.

Age might be a factor in literacy. The average age of persons by literacy category is as follows: read and write 27.4 yrs; read only 22.4 yrs; Illiterate 34.2 yrs. This suggests that older people may have had lower literacy levels, perhaps suggesting lower access to education. Thus, age was a significant factor affecting literacy levels

Age

The average age of the population as a whole was 29 years. There were a number of entries (47 or 2.67%) where the age is written in text. Most of these are less than 1 year old. These have not been included, although they may alter the data slightly.

Age Group	No.	%	% Female	% Male
< 10 years old	336	19.10%	46.43%	53.57%
10 to less than 20	395	22.46%	44.05%	55.95%
20 to less than 30	296	16.83%	40.20%	59.80%
30 to less than 40	165	9.38%	44.24%	55.76%
40 to less than 50	158	8.98%	47.47%	52.53%
50 to less than 60	138	7.85%	48.55%	51.45%
60 to less than 70	113	6.42%	44.25%	55.75%
70 to less than 80	71	4.04%	56.34%	43.66%
80 to less than 90	34	1.93%	64.71%	35.29%
90+	6	0.34%	83.33%	16.67%

In terms of ratio the overall population is 45.48% females and 54.2% males. Differences to this include:

- In the 20 to 30 age group only 40.2% of the population is female.
- After the 20 to 30 age group the percentage of women climbs steadily.

The change in demographic profile as the population ages probably reflects underlying social trends such as emigration or perhaps mortality rates.

Disability

There were only 5 people in the parish identified as having a disability.

Where Born

In the majority of cases (1699) place of birth is stated as County Clare and shows no evidence of migration within the county. Other places of origin include: Aran Islands (included as local due to proximity) 8; Connaught - 24; Rest of Munster - 8; Ulster - 3; Leinster - 2; England - 7 (of the English born, 5 were living in Doonagore); Wales - 2 (both living in Doonagore); America - 3.

The migrants listed in the census belong to a small number of families. The numbers from Connaught, primarily Galway, suggest that this area was more closely aligned to Galway and Connaught than Munster or elsewhere in Ireland. The concentration of English and Welsh born people in Doonagore is likely connected to the Quarries.

Occupation

Occupation is a fascinating category to explore as there are many of different activities listed, lots of which do not exist, or are less important nowadays. The largest overall group is 634 persons who are listed to be working directly on the land and farming:

Farmer	259
Farmer's Son	117
Farmer's Niece	1
Shepherd	8
Herdsmen's Son / Wife / Assistant Herd	3
Farmer's Wife	66
Farmer's Daughter	99
Farmer's Sister	2
Herd / Herdsman	25
Agricultural Labourer / Farm Hand / Farm Labourer / Farm Servant	54

While the category of General Labourer is difficult to decipher, it may be linked to farm work

in addition to other activities such as quarrying. There was also one person listed as a 'Jobber'.

Labourer / General Labourer	70
Jobber	1

There appears to have been an active fishing industry in the area with 44 people classified as depending on the activity in 1901:

Fish Dealer	16
Fisherman	28

As discussed later in this book, the quarries were an important employer in the Doolin area at the beginning of the 20th Century. 61 people living in the parish worked directly in the quarries. The census lists a broad range of quarry related jobs:

Flagstone Merchant	1
Mason	1
Quarry Boy	1
Quarry / Quarryman Flagstone	3
Quarry Labourer / Farmer	47
Quarry Man	2
Quarry Master	1
Quarry Superintendent	1
Stonecutter	3
Stock Clerk in Quarry	1

Domestic activities formed a large portion of occupations. It is difficult to know how many of the following were paid activities.

House Business	2
Householder	2
Cook	2
Dairymaid	1
Housekeeper	148
Housemaid	3
Housework	4
Mistress of House	1
Servant / Domestic Servant / Domestic / General Servant	29

Most items of clothing and shoes were made locally with 31 people in the parish employed in this type of activity:

Dressmaker	10
Seamstress	10
Weaver	2
Tailor	6
Shoemaker	2
Boot - Shoemaker	1

Fourteen people worked in commercial retail.

Shop Assistant	1
Shopkeeper	8
Shopkeeper's Wife	1
Publican	1
Baker	1
Shopkeeper / Farmer	2

The following table lists the remaining occupations. There are some interesting categories such as two tea agents, a telegraphist, a marine engineer, four spinsters and even five beggars living in the parish.

Nurse	8
Beggar	5
R.I.C. Pensioner	3
Blacksmith / Smyth	3
Tea Agent	2
U.S. Pensioner	1
Tinsmith	1
Gamekeeper	1
Land Steward	1
Marine Engineer	1
Telegraphist	1
Carpenter	6
Spinster	4
Caretaker	3
Postman	2
Army Pensioner	1
Journalist	1
Clerk	1
Engineer	1
Landowner	1
Piper	1
Visitor	1

Selection of Doolin Photos From the Wonderful Collection of the Irish Folklore Commission

Paddy the Post, Lúch 1930

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Michael Tierney 1930

© The Irish Folklore Commission



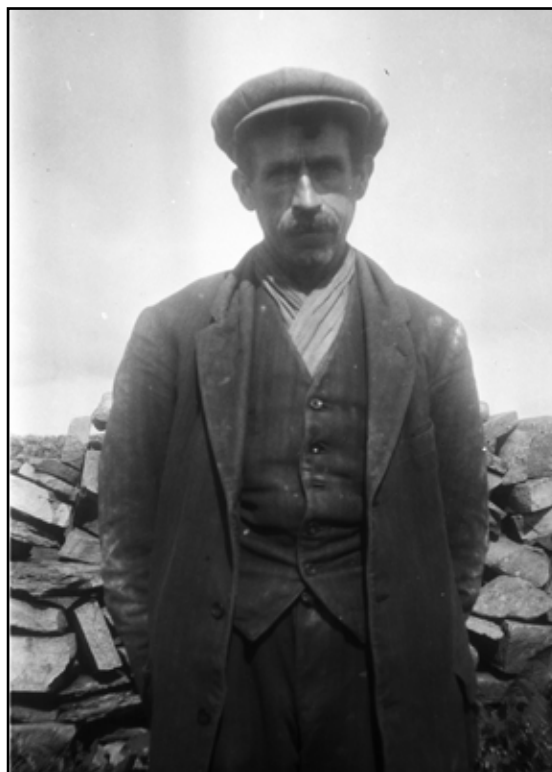
Séamus Ó Cilltráin, Baile Mháire 1930

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Pat Mc Mahon, Lúch 1930

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Pádraig Ó Cilltsutháin (Shannon)) 1985
© The Irish Folklore Commission



**Pádraig Ó Maoláin, Eileen Carey, Luogh, agus
Micheál Ó Donchú 1955**
© The Irish Folklore Commission



The Decline of Doolin Irish (The Gaeltacht of Tuath Glae)

Irish was the spoken language of the parish of *Tuath Glae* until the latter parts of the 19th century. According to O'Tuathaigh in *Ireland Before the Famine* (p.159), this was definitely the situation in 1851 and it continued to be so for almost 100 years after that. Why this Gaeltacht died by the mid 20th century is a question which has puzzled many.

I understand that the first major decline of Irish was caused by the great Famine of 1845–48 and the related exodus of people from the area. Despite this however, Irish was still in extensive use in 1901, as the census of that year shows; and from experience, I know our native language continued to be used widely up until the 1940's. Among the older people, Irish was used until almost the 1970's, though by this date, nearly all the native Irish speakers had died out. I remember, in particular, Paddy Pairic Mhichael of Fisherstreet, and Catherine Davy of Luogh (a good friend of my brother-in-law Paddy O'Connor) who died in about 2003. These were some of the last survivors of a long tradition of Gaelic speakers in Tuoclea.

The particular Irish spoken in the area was a mix of Munster Irish and Connaught Irish. Growing up I would not have been aware of such regional dialects, but I recall being on Inis Oirr in 1987, and while I was speaking Irish to my son Kevin, one of the older islanders turned to me, politely interrupted and noted that I was speaking 'Doolin Irish'. I wonder how many people nowadays would notice such subtle differences in phrases, vocabulary and pronunciation.

The Census of 1901, referred to above, showed that among young school children, English seemed to have been the preferred language by that time. Perhaps education was one of the factors

working against the Irish language. Writing about the education of a century earlier, Fr. Larkin, speaking of the hedge schools of the early 1800s, notes:

Irish was not taught nor allowed to be spoken in any of these schools (Larkin & McGrath, 1944).

This was also the case with the new National system of education which began in the 1830's.

While the Irish language has all but disappeared from Tuoclea, a great store of its history, folklore and traditions has been preserved, thanks to the likes of the late Professor Séamus Ó Duilearga of the Folklore Commission at University College Dublin (a good friend of my father - as discussed later), who collected material in the parish, mainly in the years 1929–1934. Another collector of folklore was Seamus Ennis who worked for the Commission from 1942–1947 and visited my father in September 1945. The late Fr. Seamus O'Dea, formerly Parish Priest of Ogonnelloe in East Clare also collected folklore in Doolin in the 1940's. Not all individuals who worked for the Folklore Commission were visitors; Seán Mac Mathúna (John Mc Mahon) from Luogh

collected material extensively in the Doolin and Luogh area in the 1930s and 1940s. His collection in the archives of the Commission, is currently being examined by Michelle Dunne, who plans to publish a book of the material which Seán collected.

To look a bit closer at the situation of Irish in 1901, we have done some research. As an example, the population of Luogh North was 170 persons, of which, 121 spoke Irish and English. However, there were 9 people who only spoke Irish, these were mainly older people. Only 12 people are listed as exclusively speaking English. A further 27 people had no language listed – most of these are the very young. Luogh South in the same census had a population of 93. Of these, 72 spoke Irish and English, 3 spoke only Irish, while 18 were not listed.

It would seem from this information that schoolchildren spoke English, which was taught in school. Considering the future lives of these children, it is understandable that they would be encouraged to learn English. The vast majority of them were destined to emigrate to the United States or England where the English language was essential.

A further factor which probably mitigated against the use of the Irish language was the development of the Doonagore Quarries and the phosphate mines of Judge Comyn, which are both talked about in later sections. In these industries, a good knowledge of English would have been necessary.

Emigration

If we take one little community of people and follow their progress, the impact of emigration is borne out. Let us look at the families that lived on the link road from Howley's Cross to Doonagore Castle and the young people who grew up there between the 1920's and about 1950.

Seán Ó Carúin, Seán Mac Mathúna and Pádraig Ó Flannagáin, Luach 1939

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Emigration of Sample Families				
Family	Ireland	United States	England	Total
Queally	1	6	3	10
Doherty	2	1	1	4
Griffin	4	6	1	11
O'Connor	2	2	--	4
Kelly	3	2	--	5
Total:	12	17	5	34

This table (which is based on my memory and thus, is by no means definitive) shows the dispersion of family members who left the area in this period. As can be seen, the majority emigrated to the United States and England with by far the greater number settling in the United States. All of those migrants needed to be fluent in English when they started their new lives and that fact probably coloured the attitude of families to the English language.

Regarding emigration to the United States and England, this was nothing new to Ballyvara. In the previous generation (those born 1875–1895), my father's large family of fourteen children saw nine of its members emigrating to the United States, one to England and only four remaining in Ireland.

An Emigrant Family

The Family of Darby Griffin and Bridget Fitzgerald

To illustrate the families in the first half of the 20th Century I outline the travels of my own siblings. My father Jeremiah (Darby) Griffin was born on June 9th 1882 and died on November 2nd 1959. He married Bridget (Delia) Fitzgerald of Lismorohaun / Caherbullog. They settled in the home place in Ballyvara and farmed there all their lives. In the 1930s and 1940s there were few opportunities locally (other than the mines, which offered hard work for the young men of the area) for employment, and thus, many of my siblings were forced to emigrate.

My sister **Bridie** (Bridget) was the eldest of the family. She was born on January 29th 1920 and paved the way for most of my family by emigrating to the United States in 1938, where she was sponsored by our uncle Peter. Her leaving Doolin is my earliest memory. It was on a Sunday. She went up to the cross and over to visit Aunt Nell before she left for America. I was only 3 years of age at the time and for some reason it's a troublesome memory. It was a strange day; the

Darby and Bridget Griffin



Bridie



Paddy



clouds were coming from the south racing across the sky. I saw the clouds and got frightened. It possibly wasn't the clouds that upset me, but the emotion of my parents.

Bridie married Paul Sheehan of Kerry and they had three children, Paul, Kevin and Geraldine. In later years Bridie was the person who met, fed and entertained any family and friends who were visiting America. Above all, like many generations of Griffin before her, she loved to talk and reminisce late into the night. Bridie lived a great life and in later years lived with her daughter Geraldine in Boston. She passed away on 23rd June 2017 aged 97.

Born Feb.17th 1921 **Paddy** went to the United States where he had a bar and restaurant business. He married Mary K. O'Donoghue from Doolin parish, and on his retirement, they both returned to Lisdoonvarna. Paddy died on Jan 2nd 1975. His wife Mary died on June 21st 1989. They had no children.

Born Aug. 8th 1922, **Marion / May** joined the Sisters of St. Paul the Apostle at Selly Park, Birmingham. She worked in several houses of her religious order, including Rugby College of

Marion / May / Sister Genevieve (standing), with our cousin Sr. Ethna Fitzgerald (sitting) in Birmingham



Education and Selly Oak, Birmingham, where she was Director of a home for unwed mothers. Marion died at Selly Park, Birmingham, on May 26th 1968 and she is buried with our father's sister Annie (Mother Celestine). During her religious life, Marion took the name Genevieve.

Thomas was born on July 26th 1923. He emigrated to the United States in 1947 and settled in the Boston area. He was a really good athlete, both at home and in Boston and as a wrestler in America, he won various awards. Thomas married

Thomas



Annie (left) with Bridie



Katherine Murphy, whose parents, Bill and Julia Murphy had emigrated from Cork. Thomas died on Nov. 14th 1990.

Born April 10th 1926, **Annie** worked in England with Marion in her early years. She returned to Dublin and married Patrick S. O'Connor of Luogh, Doolin (known as Paddy, Thomas, Tom). They lived in Dublin, Kilkenny, and finally Mungret in Limerick, where Paddy was Area Manager for HB Ice Cream. After Annie died, Paddy remarried, and later retired to Luogh where he built a house beside his home place.

Andy (Andrew) was born on May 2nd 1928. Andy first worked in Limerick and then emigrated to the US. While in America, he joined the army and served in Korea as a sergeant, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart for bravery. Having returned from Korea he settled in San Francisco, where he married Bridie Cormican from Kilcreest, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Later they and their family returned to Clare and took up the hotel business in Lisdoonvarna in 'The Kincora'. Andy died on June 29th 1985. All his children returned to the US but his wife Bridie returns each summer and for many years worked in the Spa in Lisdoon.

Born Jan 19th 1930, **Jerry** took over running the farm at home in Ballyvara, and lived there all his life, except for a brief time he spent in the United States. He married Teresa Scales of Ballynahoan. They had two boys, the youngest, Thomas now runs the 'home place' where he lives with his family.

Born Feb. 5th 1933, **Kathleen** emigrated to the United States at a young age. She was sponsored by, and lived with our older cousin Teresa, daughter of my dad's brother Peter. Kathleen attended school in America and after she graduated she married Richard Currier.

Andrew (Andy)



Jerry



Kathleen



Born on Oct. 7th 1935, I (**Kevin**) went to school in Doolin and Moymore and later the Christian Brothers in Dublin. I taught in Birmingham, England for a year with my cousin Sr Ethna. When I returned to Ireland I worked in Wicklow where I met and married Betty Gahan, who was also a National teacher. We had five children and settled in Ballina, Co. Tipperary where I was Principal of the National School for 27 years.

Peter was born on May 5th 1939. When he was young, he moved to live with Mollie Fitzgerald our mother's sister in Lisdoonvarna. Peter married

Peter (Pete)



Mena Donnellan of O'Callaghan's Mills and they ran a foodstore and guesthouse in Lisdoonvarna. They have five children. Peter is well known in the Lisdoonvarna area as a musician, having played the accordion in various groups through the years.

The youngest of our family is **Teresa** who was born Dec. 14th 1940 and emigrated to the US in 1959. She married Bill Philips of Alabama, and they had three children. In later years, Teresa moved from Boston to Florida. Her husband Bill died 19th May 2020.

Kevin



Teresa



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY SIBLINGS AND PREVIOUS generations of emigrants is the fact that they were able to return to Ireland to visit family and friends. Due to improvements in transport, those who travel to America are no longer gone forever, and nowadays, many of my extended family, particularly some of my nieces, nephews visit Ireland quite regularly.

Family Get-together in America
when the Irish Relatives were visiting



Peter (Pete) and Kevin at a family ‘do’



Family Reunions

It was always a great occasion when my emigrant siblings came ‘home’ for a wedding or celebration (Pete, Jerry, Annie, Andy, Kathleen, Kevin)



Darby and Bridget Griffin with some of their family



Bridge over the Allie River at Roadford, 2020



My Home and Family



My Home in Ballyvara*

My very earliest memories are of my own home in Ballyvara. Our house was thatched with a kitchen and two bedrooms – one on each side of the central kitchen – the big room and the small room, as we called them; and that describes them well. The big room had a fireplace, but the fire was rarely lit - only at Christmas, or when someone was ill in bed. I can remember its being lit only a few times in my life. The small room was just what it was called - very small and it had an attic-type room above it, with a stairs up to it. This attic was once a bedroom, but that space wasn't used in my time.

The kitchen was the hub of my early world. Here all the activity of the family took place. Here all visitors came, and here is where my mother worked all day. We had an open fire with a crane and grate, and you could see the light of day up

through the wide chimney if you sat into the hobs either side of the grate. On the walls hung the picture of the Sacred Heart with a little oil lamp always burning before it, a small mirror on the wall near the front window, and hooks behind the front door for the horse's tackling. There was a row of simple little St. Bridget Crosses pinned along the rafter over the front window, obscured by age, except for the more recent ones, added to the line on the first of February each year.

This all changed as time progressed. We got a range and put some pictures on the walls - photos etc., and then John Queally put up a new ceiling of tongued-and-grooved boards, hiding the rafters. Even the stone flags on the kitchen floor had to make way for a slab of cement! These were the stone flags which had probably been put in place when the house was built in 1848. Today, if we had them, we'd be in the height of fashion!

* The painting above is my own memory of the 1848 house where I grew up in Ballyvara.

At night when the big oil lamp was lowered and was being filled, often, some of the paraffin spilled on the flags. Our delight was to sprinkle some hot ashes on the oil and light it, to see the wonderful colours of the flame - yellow, pink, purple, green, blue - the fascinating spectrum of colours dancing on our flagged floor like a rainbow. We'd watch it until the last of the paraffin was burnt up, flickering until it eventually died out. Colour was fascinating to me then. I recall that the only colour I saw in Doolin school apart from blue or black ink, was a puce pencil. Then, my sister Kathleen discovered that if you tore a piece off the cover of 'The Messenger' (A red-covered Catholic publication which was in most houses then), and steeped it in water, it made a red kind of paint, or ink!

Regarding the oil lamp, the greatest calamity would be when the globe would crack, so one had to be very careful not to turn up the wick too

Quern or Mill Stone of Unknown Date

I don't remember this stone ever being used to grind grain, but every house had one lying around somewhere



quickly, but to let it heat up gradually. If the globe did break it meant a journey to Johneen's (John Shannon's) beside Fitz's Cross, or to Considine's in Roadford to get a new one.

Electricity didn't reach Ballyvara until 1949, so we depended a lot on paraffin oil. During the war years, it, like everything else, was scarce. Sometimes a barrel of oil was washed ashore among other wreckage, and those who were lucky enough to know the person who found it would get a couple of gallons. Then we didn't have to spare the oil so much. The only problem was that this oil must have been some kind of diesel, as the smell from it was bad, particularly when we lit it ... it was very unpleasant! During those years the cliffs were well patrolled, and a matchstick would not come ashore without being spotted. There were stories too of people who dared the roughest waves to be first to grab a beam of timber or a raft of plywood. The outhouses of Doolin must have had the finest marine-ply doors in Ireland after the war!

The front window of our house, like all our windows, was small, and under it was a drawer full of items such as clothes brushes and combs. You could find anything there! It was here that my father shaved on Saturday evenings with the little mirror propped on the sash of the front window.

The chairs were súgán (sugaun), and at one time we had a 'settle-bed' along the back wall. There was a long stool behind the back door too, and on it a bucket of water from the spring well just down the field. We had another well in the field near Doherty's - known as the well field or the horse's field, as it was there that the horse was always kept.

Our back window was like a door, (though not in length) in that it could be opened out fully, and on very warm days in summer my mother would

Sugaun Chair belonging to Stiofán 1935

© The Irish Folklore Commission



often open that window out. It was different to the other windows. According to 'Aunt Teresa' (my uncle Peter's daughter) in America, it was my grandmother, Bid McCormack who got that window put in. The story is that she was always asking my grandfather to put a window in the back wall of the kitchen as it was very dark, but while he had the good intention, he never got around to breaking out the window! Eventually she got tired of asking, and one day when he was away at a fair, she got Tommy Queally to break out the wall and put in the window. I think that the McCormacks were generally more positively forceful than the Griffins, who seemed to have had an easygoing way with them! Interestingly, we are doubly related to the McCormack family of Kilfenora as our grandfather married Bridget McCormack and our grandfather's sister married into McCormacks - the two women changed houses.

Tommy Queally and his wife Annie (Rynne) lived next door. They were great friends of ours and Annie's sister Mary was married to our Uncle Peter in America. I remember when Tommy built their new house (now deserted and empty). We always felt that their new modern house was cold compared to our snug warm thatched roof.

While our thatch gave trouble on occasion, and at times leaked, it was worth it for the heat and comfort. Occasionally my father would have to go up and replace a section after a storm or when the blackbirds rooted into the surface. Blackbirds were not the only birds to visit our thatch. In the nesting season, a furtive robin or more often a wren, could be seen darting in under the edge of the thatch where it met the side walls of the house. Since Tuoclea is a windswept landscape, the birds were happy to have a sheltered spot as there was neither tree nor shrub for birds in which to nest.

I was born in 1935 and at that time our house was old. In those days it was unheard of that a mother would give birth in hospital, and so we were all born at home like all our neighbours. The house was built in 1848 according to my father. Before that the family lived way down the fields near Davenport's, and the mark of that house was there in the hill until recent times. The entrance to our land was originally from Fisherstreet, as was Davenport's and Doherty's whose old houses were also built way down the fields near the river. The link road from Howley's Cross to Doonagore Castle had not been made at that time.

Our house, as I said was built up near the new road just mentioned, and the date might be significant as around that time the road from Howley's Cross to the castle seems to have been built. This road may have been a Famine relief project, and its position at the upper end of our farm would explain why the 'new house' was built so far up from Fisherstreet. Around this time too, the boundaries of the local townlands were adjusted, with some juggling of Ballyvara and Cronagort West. The stones of our house were quarried a few yards in front of the house itself - in what we called the 'front street'. I can recall that my father planned to build a new house about 1939-40, and one day when I was ill and supposed to be in bed

in the big room, I spent most of the day at the back window, watching a number of men including my father, Edward O'Connor and a couple more neighbours clearing a patch of ground just below the house. They quarried a pile of stones for the new proposed building. My father also got some good flags, about 4 inches thick and 30 to 40 inches long and about 12 to 18 inches wide for lintels of doors and windows. They were piled in front of the house ready for use. Some change of plans stopped the building of the new house. I don't know why this was, but most likely, the outbreak of the war and the uncertain economic conditions put the job on hold.

The idea of building was never taken up again until after my father's death, when my brother Jerry built his house. Jerry was a very neat worker in stone, like our father, who worked in Doonagore Quarries. Jerry's son, Thomas, has continued that tradition and is a splendid stone worker as many examples of his work all over north Clare testify.

The old house of 1848 has now disappeared completely and is replaced by a new cowshed and slatted house. The lintels which my father got for the proposed new house back in 1940 are incorporated into the wall in front of the site of the old house.

Our fields were all north of the house except the two between the house and the road. Our farm was bounded by the farms of Edward O'Connor, Quilnans (Cullinan's) and Davenports to the west, with Dohertys to the east, and the river Aille to the north. This river was dangerous with steep defiles, especially what we called 'the Soiléir'. It was near here that Doherty's old house was situated but like our family, they too built their new house up near the road (from Howley's to the Castle). Our Aunt Nell married Tom Doherty, a next-door neighbour and she and her family lived beside us.

She had a difficult life as her husband Tom died young, leaving a family of small children.

I remember a night prayer my Father taught us all, which we would say before going to bed. My brother Thomas wrote this prayer in a copybook which is preserved in the National Folklore collection which is held in University College Dublin:

*There are four corners in my bed,
Four great angels at my head,
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
God bless this bed that I lie on.
If any evil spirit come to me ,
My blessed Lady waken me,
One to guard me, one to guide me,
Two to carry my soul to heaven.*

The World of Darby Griffin

My father Diarmuid Ó Gríobhtha, known as Darby Griffin, or Darby Beag, was born on 9th June 1882 and died on November 2nd 1959. Older people would refer to our family as the 'Griffys' - from the Irish Gríofa, and it was only some time after the 1901 Census that we became known as Griffins. My father was from a large family, and was called 'Darby Beag' to differentiate from his father, 'Darby Mór'

Our family goes back a long time in Ballyvara, a Widow Griffy being listed in the *Tithe Applotment Books* of 1827. There is record of a gravestone in Killilagh graveyard which carries the name Dermot Griffy who was born in 1732 and died in 1799. I cannot prove from any records that he was of our family, but the name Dermot / Diarmuid has been in the family for generations. My grandfather, my father, my brother, and his son, and many other members of our extended family are named Diarmuid, Jeremiah or Jerry, and we even have a Darby Griffin in recent generations.

We were a large family - six boys and five girls. Now I have one brother left in Lisdoonvarna - Peter, and two sisters in America, Kathleen and Theresa. Ballyvara is a changed place. my brother Jerry's wife, Teresa and her son Thomas and his family live there now. They succeed generations of Griffins in Ballyvara, and continue the tradition of a warm welcome, and a friendly chat by the fire to the present day.

Visiting Friends

My father loved to visit his many old friends in places such as Doolin, Doonagore and Fisherstreet. I often went with him, and can still remember as a child, coming from the Mock (a plot of land near the sea where we grew crops) and calling in to Connors' pub for a drink. Gussie who later made O'Connor's Pub a world-famous landmark for Irish traditional music, was young then; at that time the little pub was very small. My father would go into the kitchen and sit with his pint at the end of the table opposite Gussie's mother Susie (Mrs. O'Connor) while Thomas (her husband) sat beside the fire. Then they would get talking and tracing about old people they knew, family, friends and neighbours – from Doolin to America and back! All the news would be discussed.

Another place we visited was Doonagore, and the visit there would be a long night. There was Davorens - Pauric and his brother Const., with their sisters, Katie Jackson and Janie Hayes. Those in my eyes were very old people. They had an incredible gift for remembering the lineage and history of families and they could trace relations for possibly a hundred years or more and would talk about cousins to the tenth degree (or possibly more)!

Then there was Patty Flanagan of Cruc (we always said 'Cruc', not Cnoc) beyond the castle. Patty (or

Paitsín Ó Flannagáin 1930
© The Irish Folklore Commission



as he was called, Patty Paitsín, i.e. son of Paitsín - see photo) was a fine concertina player, and he had the nickname 'sober', which was because of his gentle style of playing. Patty was a gentle sort and generous with his help, particularly in relation to music. My brother Andy went to him for a while to learn the concertina, and in fact, he helped the famous Russells when they started playing music. He was of an age with my father I would say. I also remember his father, a very old man - Paitsín Flanagan. I cannot forget their great hospitality and kindness. There were many other gentle and friendly people like this, who always welcomed friends for a long night of talking, tracing and storytelling. These were my father's friends.

I recall that in very many cases such as I have described above, the talk would go from Irish to English and back and forth. This was especially true of our visits to Doonagore. They were great Irish speakers there, and often when I felt that

I was not supposed to understand the topic of discussion, the Irish would flow fast and eloquent, though they forgot that I was as much at home with Irish as with English in those days.

One special day when Irish took over was St. Patrick's Day. We would go down across the fields to Fitz's Cross and then on the main road through Roadford to Mass in Tuoclea and we always met the older people from Fisherstreet going to Mass. The talk on this great national day was all Irish - there would be Thomas O'Connor, Timmy Shannon, The Fitzgeralds (my mother's cousins) all going to Mass and I could not miss the pride and joy of those people when they talked in Irish on that special day - something they could have done on any Sunday of the year!

An Uncomplicated Life

I remember going to the bog with my father and returning in the horse car. This was great, as we hated the long journey across the fields - especially on the way up as there was a steep hill up by Kilmartins to the Nurse's Cross on the Lisdoonvarna - Cliffs road.

I can recall my father pulling in the horse just over at Long's near Jack Garrahee's, or on the road above Doonagore. He would light his pipe then and just enjoy the beautiful and expansive view of the coastline stretching from Slieve Elva on the right, across to Tuoclea and the Creg towards Doolin and the Cliffs of Moher. Galway Bay was stretched out in front of us, with the Connemara mountains and the Aran islands. (Sometimes there was smoke rising in wisps from the Connemara shore, and we were told that they were burning kelp). I recall my father commenting on this sight as he sat and enjoyed his pipe. He would say: 'If they only had that in America!!'. And he would wonder why everyone didn't bother to look and see such a wonderful sight as he saw! He would then pull the reins and we would be home in a short while. Those were good times, when life was simple and uncomplicated.

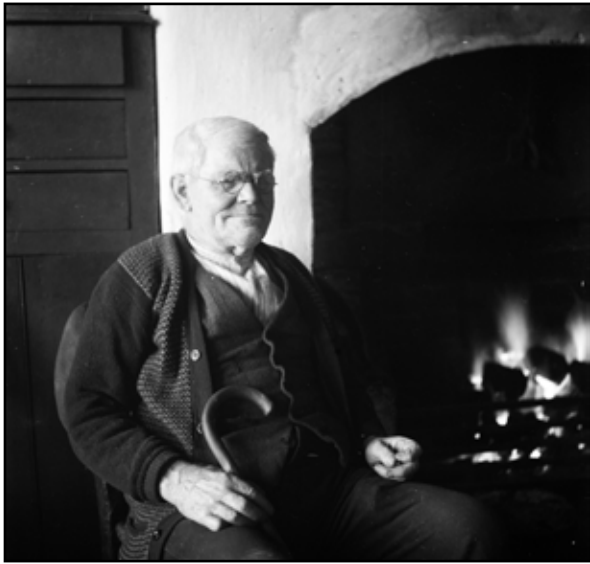
My father was not noted as a teller of the great tales of wonder, of great deeds and strange happenings, (some of them frightening). However, he did know the stories, and sitting around our fire in Ballyvara we heard these fantastic legends, stories and tales. As children, these stories made us look under the

View of the Atlantic From Above Doonagore, 2020. This photo was taken by my grandson Robert. How delighted his great grandfather would be to think that his descendants are still enjoying this wonderful view.



Stiofáin Uí hEalaoire (Stephen Helery) 1937

© The Irish Folklore Commission



bed before we went to sleep, with our heads in a whirl from the tales we heard about ‘Madra na n-Ocht gCos’ (the eight-legged dog) or heroes jumping into bottomless wells to another world.

The Men from Aran

While our house was a small three roomed dwelling, there was always a place for the Aran men who called to our house on their way to the market in Ennistymon. I recall them coming up across the fields in single file, my father said it was to not damage too much grass by walking on it. They came into the house and one would have a brown hessian bag which we called ‘a coarse bag’. This would be left discreetly by the door, but we knew that there was cured fish in that bag - ling, mongach and pollack. The fish was put aside, and my mother would cook some of it for them. There was always plenty left for the family too, though we didn’t care much for salted fish as children.

On their return from Ennistymon, if the weather was bad or the sea rough, we might have the Aran men for days - sometimes several days. Then at last they left, and my father would go out to the wall at the back of the house and watch the

curragh going out. He would lean on the double stone wall, light his pipe and watch. I remember being there too, seeing the little curragh appear and disappear until it passed crab island. My father seemed satisfied then, - this seemed to have been the dangerous part of their journey. But we still watched until our eyes smarted, spotting the little black dot appear and disappear until it could be seen no longer. He would come into the house then and my mother would say ‘God speed them’.

Stiofáin Uí Ealaoire

While not well-known as a storyteller, my father had a terrific memory and local knowledge. He knew every stone and every bush in the parish, and I feel, looking back, that he had a wonderfully rich life, without ever travelling far from Ballyvara. It is probably this local understanding that led to his friendship with Professor Séamus Ó Duilearga, founder and Director of the Irish Folklore Commission.

Delargy[†] visited Doolin a number of times beginning some time around 1929 and he did most of his recordings in Anthony Moloney’s in Fisherstreet – near the old Barracks, that’s the last house before the bridge. It was a lovely comfortable house, I think the dispensary used to be held there. The Moloneys would have been honoured to put their house at the disposal of such a learned man as Delargy. On occasion he would send down to Connors for a tin bucket of porter to entertain his guests, and this would get the conversation and stories flowing.

Anthony Moloney and his brother ‘Jake’ were into horses and used to breed them. They had a famous stallion in a field down beside Fisherstreet, which is mentioned later in these stories (and is possibly

[†] Curiously, while people were very conscious about being respectful in those days, my father always referred to Professor Delargy as ‘Delargy’, which was meant as a term of endearment.

**Anthony Moloney with one of his Horses at
The RDS in the 1970s**

(Photo Courtesy of Frank Moloney)



the horse in the 1935 photograph of Fisherstreet in the section on vernacular houses). Anthony married 'B' and had a son Paddy Anthony. I remember when Paddy came to school for the first time.

Anyhow, back to Delargy and his folklore collecting. My mother died in 1955 and from then on, my father's health deteriorated, so, he went to live with my sister Annie and her husband, Paddy O'Connor in Churchtown, Dublin. During this period (c. 1957-59) he spent a lot of time visiting with Delargy, helping him to understand and transcribe old recordings of local storyteller Stiofáin Uí Ealaoire, from Luach. The book *Leabhar Stiofáin Uí Ealaoire*, which Clare County Library describes as 'an important assemblage of oral tradition, rescued from the embers of the last Gaelic firesides of Doolin' was eventually published in 1981, thanks to the efforts of the late Daithí Ó hÓgáin. Sadly, Delargy had died the previous year, but this important volume of folklore stands as a tribute to both of these wonderful academics and their respect and recognition for the traditions of this little corner of County Clare. As I look at my copy of *Leabhar Stiofáin*, I remember hearing my father taking about listening to Stiofáin telling stories by the

fireside in his little house up over the hill. With pride, I imagine my father many years later, being collected in Churchtown, to go and sit with his learned friend in Rathgar, as they analysed and transcribed the words of Stiofáin, which have beautifully preserved the traditions and stories of times passed. My father's contribution is fully recognised in the editors notes and appendices of *Leabhar Stiofáin*; what a lovely tribute to a quiet and gentle man from a time past, whose love and passion for the Irish language is preserved in such a wonderful gem of folklore and tradition. I'm absolutely sure that my father Darby along with his friend Professor Ó Duilearga and Daithí Ó hÓgáin are sitting by a fire in a quiet corner of heaven, enthralled by the wonderful stories, rhymes and songs of Stiofáin.‡

Seamus Ennis Visits my Father

A further connection between my father and the Folklore Commission was via the great Seamus Ennis who was an internationally known piper and broadcaster. Seamus is known for his work with Radió Teilifís Éireann as well as the British Broadcasting Corporation, but in his younger days, he collected music and other material for the Folklore Commission, under the aforementioned Professor Delargy (he did this from about 1942 to 1946/7). In his travels he visited Counties Donegal and Galway as well as County Clare, and while travelling he meticulously recorded his experiences and encounters. While he was in Clare and lodging at Miss Murphy's in Ballaghline, he visited my father. His account of the visit in 1945, was written in Irish, but the following is a translated version of what he noted:

‡ For those interested in further insight into Delargy's collecting of folklore, and in particular a lovely human description of his encounters with 'The finest Irish storyteller [he] met in Clare' (Stiofáin), see Ó Duilearga, 1965.

Thursday 27-9-‘45.

Sliocht as Gaeilge

I slept a piece of the morning, because it was a wet and mild day. I went up in the afternoon by the Castle, to ‘Darby Griffy’, S.O Duilearga’s friend. He was a small placid calm man and very pleasant. We talked for a long while together and he sang two songs for me - that is all he knew of them - ‘God Save Ireland’, and another to the tune of B...Bhain. He told me that Séamus O Duilearga wrote them down from him already. There wasn’t a lot in the same two songs (of no great value). I cannot recall what tune the first song was to, but it was some common tune anyhow.

I spent most of the evening with him, and he walked down with me to the crossroads at the castle. He turned for home then as the rain came down once more - nothing rare in that!

This ‘Darby Griffy’ is of the old world, and it seemed to me that when he left me, I stepped back once more into the everyday world which you and I live in. This, however, was not because of the subject of our conversation, but because of something (some quality), about Darby himself which I don’t understand.

And Darby was not the only person in whose company this happened to me. The same mystique (aura?) went with other people around the country with whom I spent time. I made my way west, trying to fathom this mystery, but when I reached Mrs. Murphy’s house I was as far from solving the puzzle as when Darby shook my hand beyond!

This extract is taken from a translation of Seamus Ennis’ diaries, published in a beautiful volume entitled *Going to the Well for Water* (2009), produced by the learned Ríonach uí Ógáin, former Director of the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

Scealta o m’Athair (Diarmuid O Griobhtha)

One of my regrets is that I didn’t record very much information from my father. However, I did phonetically transcribe two stories which he narrated to me in 1954. The following is an attempt to reconstruct these two tales in his wonderful flowing Irish.

Scéal I

Maraíodh báille i gCiarraí fadó. Boitíní[§] caola a bhí acu an t-am sin. Bhíodar ag iompar an chónra ar a nguailinn agus casadh file leotha ar an mboitín, agus d’fhiafraigh sé díobh cé a bhí marbh.

Tá, a dúradar, Seán Ó Murchú, báille. D’fhiafraigh sé díobh cad a bhain do.

‘A leithéid seo d’fhear a sháith scian ann inné agus mharbh sé é.’

‘Leagaigí anuas an cónra, go n-aibrím an sailm dó’.

Do leag, agus choinníodar amach uaidh, agus chuaigh an file ar a dhá ghlún agus dúirt:

‘Mo ghrása an bás nár ndearna dearmad riamh,

Mo ghrása an láimh a sháith an t-arm id chliabh,

Mo ghrása an té mharaigh an báille gránna, damanta dian,

Agus tógaigí libh é agus cuirigí é in ainm an diabhail.

Uair na ngrást’

Ar uair do bháis

Agus leathuair spáis na raghaidh tú’

§ This (Boitín) is an unusual word, possibly a derivation of bóithrín. But, it’s the word which we used in both Irish and English to describe the little narrow laneway from our house up to the road. Out of grandeur, and to our amusement, my Father’s sister Marion, who travelled the world as a nurse, used to refer to our ‘boitín’ as ‘Jer’s Avenue’.

Ní truimide an loch an lacha
Ní truimide an t-each a srian
Ní truimide an caoire an ol(n)a,
Ní truimide an cholainn an chiall.

Scéal II

Bhí an diabhal a' goil a' bóthar lá agus casadh báille leis. Bhí an báille a' goil a' seirbheáil próisisí.

‘Cá’il tú dul inniubh?’ a dubhairt an diabhal.

‘Táim a’ goil síos a’ bóthar,’ ar seisean - ‘tá próisisí le seirbheáil agam.’

‘Be’ mise leat tamall den bhóthar,’ adubhairt an diabhal.

Níor chuadar i bhfad nó go bhfacadar garsún agus a mháthair a’ rith ‘na dhiaidh, agus nuair nárbh fhéidir léithe teacht suas leis, stop sí.

‘Ó muise,’ ar sise, ‘go dtóga an diabhal leis thú.’

‘Ná tabharfá leat an garsún sin?’ a dubhairt an báille leis an diabhal.

‘Ó, ní fhéadfainn,’ a dubhairt sé, ‘mar níor dubhairt sí óna croí amach é.’

Nuair a chuadar tamall beag eile síos, bhí cráin mhuice a’ réabadh carn fataí. Bhí garsún sa tsráid agus labhair sé isteach lena mháthair:

‘Ó a mháthair, a mháthair’ adubhairt sé, ‘tá an chráin ag réabadh an chairn.’

‘Muise, go dtóga an diabhal leis a’ chráin,’ a dubhairt an mháthair.

‘Ná labharfá leat a’ chráin sin?’ a dubhairt an báille.

‘Ní fhéadfainn,’ a dubhairt sé, ‘mar níor dúirt sí óna croí amach é’

Tamall beag eile síos bhí an báille a’ goil isteach i sráid, - áit a raibh sé a’ gabhail a’ seirbheáil próiseas. Rith garsún isteach go dtí a mháthair:

‘Ó a mháthair’, a deir se, ‘tá an báille ag teacht’.

‘Muise, go dtóga an diabhal leis an báille,’ a dubhairt an mháthair.

Chuir an diabhal a chrúcaí ann.

‘Cad a thá tú a’ dhul a’ dhéanamh? a dubhairt an báille.

‘Tabharfaidh mé tusa liom anois,’ arsa an diabhal, ‘mar dubhairt sise óna croí amach é’.

Sliocht eile as Gaeilge

The following are a few comments on growing up in Doolin which I would like to present in my own Irish.

Seo leanas aistriú ar chuid den scéal thuas ... (Nílím a’ rádh gur Gaeilge an Chláir í seo thíos, mar tá meascán de chanúintí éagsúla im chuid Gaeilge!)

Rugadh mo athair - Diarmuid Ó Gríobhtha (Darby Griffey) ar an naoú lá de Mheithimh sa bhlian míle ocht gcéad agus ochtó dó. Dob é an sloinne ‘Griffy’ (ón nGaeilge ‘Gríobhtha’) a bhí ar ár gclann ag an am sin agus anuas go dtí c. 1901, nuair a d’athraigh siad an t-ainm go ‘Griffin’.

Toisc gurbh é ‘Diarmaid’ ainm mo sheanathar, tugadh Darby Mór air, agus tugadh Darby Beag ar m’athair.

Chómhnaigh mo chlann i dteach beag trí sheomra. Mar sin féin, bhí fáilte sa teach sin roimh mhuintir Árann i gcónaí. Thagaidís chugainn ar a mbealach go hInis Díomáin, áit a mbíodh margadh ar siúl.

Is cuimhin liom go maith iad ag teacht aníos tríd na páirceanna ó Shráid na nIascairí, - iad ag siúl duine i ndiaidh duine, ar eagla go loitfeadh siad an féar - Bhí féar agus talamh gann go leor in Árann ag an am sin!

Bhíodh mála á iompar ag duine des na fearaibh (níor tháinig mná riamh), agus nuair a thagaidís isteach sa chistin, d’fhágfaí an mála ar leataoibh.

Bhí a fhios maith againn go raibh éisc sa mhála sin. D’ullmhaíodh mo mháthair béile dóibh ansin, agus d’ithidís cuid den iasc. Bhíodh dóthain fágtha don chlann freisin, ach ní raibh aon ghoile againne páisti do na héisc chéanna.

Ar maidin nuair a d’éiríomar chun dul ar scoil, bheadh na hÁrannaigh imithe go hInis Díomáin, ach ghlaoigh siad orainn arís ar an mbealach abhaile, go háirithe dá mbeadh an aimsir go dona nó an fharraige ina rabharta. Sa chás sin, d’fhanadís linn go ceann roinnt lá agus uaireanta go ceann seachtaine. Sa ‘settle bed’ sa chistin a chodlaidís - suíochán ba ea é sa ló, ach d’osclaítí amach ar nós leaba é san oíche.

Faoi dheireadh, d’imídís leo, síos go Sráid na nIascairí aríst, agus siar go Bealachalaighin chun casadh ar Inis Oirr.

Is cuimhin liom a bheith im’ sheasamh ag an bhfalla dúbailte ar chúl an tí i mBaile Mháire lem athair, ag faire ar an gcurrach ag dul amach. Uaireanta d’fhéadfá é a fheiceáil mar spota dubh ag éirí leis an dtonn agus uaireanta eile bheadh an currach beag imithe as radharc ar fad. D’fhanamar ansin nó go raibh an currach imithe as radharc.

Is cuimhin liom dul go dtí an portach leis an tae, agus ag filleadh abhaile sa charr. Thaitin sin go mór linn toisc go raibh cnoc ard agus aistear fada ón dteach suas go dtí teach mhuintir Kilmartin agus thar crosaire na banaltran (ar bhóthar Lios Dúin Bhearna - na Failtreacha).

Is cuimhin liom go stopfadh mo athair an capall gairid don sean uachtarlann, áit a bhfuil teach Jack Garrahe anois. Lasadh sé an píopa agus d’fhanadh sé ag breathnú ar an radharc álainn amach thar Dhubhlainn agus Cuan na Gaillimhe go Conamara agus Oileáin Árann.

Dob álainn ar fad é an radharc sin agus dheireadh m’athair:

‘Dá mbeadh a leithéid sin acu i Meiriceá!!’

Tomás Mac Namara, Fisherstreet 1931

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Micheál Ó Donnchú 1955

© The Irish Folklore Commission



More Stories & Memories

Wells

Every farm around ours had a well. Water is the most necessary item for survival, and a good spring well was an essential for man and beast. The very situation of Ballyvara, located beneath limestone hills, carrying water from the top of Doonagore to the sea ensured a good supply of wells.

In the past, wells were of paramount importance, and that is why they were so carefully documented especially in the old military maps and atlases. Movement of troops necessitated a good supply of fresh water, and there was plenty of such movement throughout Ireland for centuries.

Holy wells

Holy wells are places of pilgrimage and healing, and are also plentiful throughout Ireland, also being well documented. Up in Liscannor, Saint Brigid's Well held importance for the people of Doolin, but my focus here, however, is on the very local, family farm well.

Farm Wells

We had three wells on our farm. None of them ever ran dry, even in the hottest testing months of September and October. The well in the horse's field near Doherty's fell into disuse as did the second well in the rushy field below 'the moher' (that was the name of the field directly north of our old house). I can still remember my father describing how he discovered the third well – the one in use in my time (1935-). This well was situated about twenty yards below the wall of the moher. I have reason to remember its exact location from the many cans of spring water I carried from that well. In the hottest summer day, there was a coolness about the well as the can was plunged into its dark water sending the little spiders scurrying into the shadows of its overhanging moss and fern.

Queallys had a well very conveniently across the road from their house. There was an older well in the field opposite their new house up about one hundred and fifty yards from the road. Even in

Saint Brigid's Well, Liscannor, 2020



my time, this well was but seldom used, the one beside the house being much more convenient.

Dohertys had a well far down near the river - convenient to their old house down among the fields, but too far from their new house built up at the road. So, they sometimes used our well in the horse's field.

Since I spent a few years with my aunt Nora and her husband Martin Walsh in Lisheen, I can also recall the wells in that area. At the foot of the little hill, a very short distance above Walsh's lived Tommy Kelly and his wife, Bridgie (Curry). A few yards below the garden in front of Kelly's house was a stream, on the bank of which was a spring well. Kelly's was a house I loved to visit – often with my aunt Nora, or sometimes on my own. They were a lovely gracious couple and possibly because they had no children, they always welcomed me. My first vision of wonderful American aeroplanes was from calendars sent by Tommy's family in America and kept by Bridgie for me. In that house too, I first saw Tommy fashion a beautiful St. Bridget's cross from dried grass stalks on St. Bridget's Eve – the Clare St. Bridget's Cross - very different from the national St. Bridget's Cross used as an emblem on Television.

In most houses, including my own home in Doolin, little wooden crosses were made from very light timber and nailed to the rafter of the kitchen with all the crosses from the previous years. This was on the Eve of St. Bridget. I still recall the game of counting the St. Bridget Crosses in many kitchens – sometimes they were so many or because some were obscure and had blackened from the smoke of years, it was difficult to count them.

Getting back to wells: I recall that on one occasion during my stay with my aunt, I developed a cough and chest congestion. It proved very stubborn and not even turnip soup could shift it, so Aunt

'Clare' St Bridget Crosses

While at home we usually made simple Bridget Crosses from two pieces of light timber, these (made by my granddaughters Emma and Kate Griffin) are in the style that I learned from Tommy Kelly in Lisheen.



Nora had to prescribe. First thing in the morning, I was to take a mug, and run at top speed to the well over the field about 150 yards. Having filled the mug, I was to drink the water and return to the house at the same top speed. Whether this solved my problem I cannot recall, but I certainly can remember my breathless coughing. I'm sure however that the cold spring water and all the exertion cleared up my cough.

Returning to Doolin, I remember a well situated about a hundred yards from the bridge on the road to the castle beside the waterfall. My father knew of this well of course and sent me for some water there once. Though not very accessible, the well was clearly marked out by the profusion of rust all about it - it was a great iron well my father said. Even though the well was not cared for in any way, I did manage to get a can full of spring water with little rust floating about. This well was beside a short-cut to Doonagore at a place where Stiofáin once encountered a group of fairies on his way home from Roadford!

There was also a well below the castle beside the road where our road meets the one from Nagle's to Doonagore. This well was said to have a cure for warts. In my time it was clearly a well, though in recent years it has almost disappeared through neglect. I'm not sure but this well was said to have supplied the castle after it was newly renovated in the 1960's or thereabout.

Another well was in Fisherstreet. One had to go down to the river from the street opposite Jim Fitzgerald's, (our mother's cousin) and the water came out through rocks in the far river bank under the hill. This was a well which served the village and I remember seeing people draw water from it on many occasions. That was in summertime when the river ran dry. In winter however, there was often a flood; I don't know where they got water then as they were cut off from the well.

One had to be careful getting water from this well as Anthony Moloney's grey stallion was in that field and we were warned that he was a very dangerous horse. If he was not in that field, he was in the field beyond Davenport's bordering Nagles land. As we came down, we would creep past Davenports in case he saw us and attacked. I think in reality that the same stallion never attacked anyone. I'm not sure, but I think he was the horse called Solid Oak, which had been shipped from the Aran Islands to Galway and collected from there by Anthony, who walked him all the way to Doolin.

Almost all of the wells I describe have now fallen into disuse since water schemes throughout the countryside have made them obsolete. As I have already said, there was a well in Walsh's field near the house in Lisheen, but there was also a well directly in front of Tommy and Bridgie Kelly's near Walsh's. Wells on the roadside were commonplace. There was a lovely little well below

Walsh's on the road to Lahinch. This was below Currys (later Michael McCarthy's) and Sweeneys - about a hundred yards below Sweeneys. I'm glad to say that the last time I was on that road a number of years ago, the little well was still there and just as well cared for as it was seventy years ago.

Wakes

I can recall a few wakes from my young days, though young people were not expected to attend unless somebody close to the family had died. The first wake I can remember was that of an old man known as 'Sthoter' (rhymes with Boher) who lived next door and worked for my aunt Nell (Doherty) for many years. He was a withered old grey-haired man with a cap. He had a little lean-to behind the house and it was here that he was waked. During the evening of the wake, a tall old woman in a black shawl arrived to the wake from Moher. We understood that she was a relative or some way connected to Sthoter and she had come to pay her respects. Her name was 'Nora Óg' - an unlikely name for such an ancient lady.

In those days my two best friends were my sister Kathleen and Joe Queally. Wherever they went, I followed, though I was a little younger. On this occasion we were sitting on the flagged stone roof of Queally's shed about fifty yards from the wake house. We had a grand-stand view of the mourners as they came and went.

Shortly after 'Nora Og's' arrival, we were startled by the loud cries coming from Doherty's. It was Nora Og, we learned who had set up crying - or 'keening' - for Sthoter. Whether she was reciting a whole verse we could not hear, but I still recall the eerie rise and fall of her voice ending every now and then with an incredibly loud 'O Voe, Voe'.

To us it sounded like what we thought a Bean SÍ would sound like.

Not to be outdone, the three of us renegades began imitating the old woman trying to outdo each other with our 'O! Voe, Voe', until somebody came running out to stop us. We were ordered off the shed roof and sent packing far from the wake house with dire warnings about punishment to follow.

Only then did we begin to worry about facing in home and the telling-off we would get. However, my father and mother were very easy on us. I think they may even have been a little amused by our antics. Afterwards I heard my father speak very disapprovingly about the keening – even in those days, it was an old Irish custom, long ago forgotten. Somehow, he felt it was out of place in modern Ireland.

Another wake, which I can recall was held at Howleys. This family lived in a thatched house about a hundred yards above the cross on the way up to the creamery and Lisdoonvarna. They were very good friends of ours, and because there were no children in the family, our family inherited their land. After Sean's death his two sisters, Marge and Norr, who had both returned from America, and the last of the family, lived there. I recall how these two very old frail ladies would 'fix' (butter) the bread when they gave us a cup of tea. They had some quaint expressions – probably from their years in America. These two kept their house beautifully. There was never a rib of thatch out of place, thanks to Mick Kelly from Kilshanny who seemed to be forever renewing or replacing it. The building itself was the usual North Clare house of that time. The main door opened into the kitchen at the northern end of which was the small room – really only a store – damp and cold. The big room was at the other end of the

kitchen and at this end was the open hearth which helped to warm the big room - Marge's and Norr's bedroom. The main furniture in the bedroom was two four-poster beds. These were antiquated affairs with high posts right up to the roof, with a drape surrounding each bed full-length from floor to ceiling. The drapes were drawn back as one got into the bed, when they were closed again like a tent. The whole atmosphere was one of very faded grandeur.

The first sister to die was Norr. She died and was waked at home in her own room. As the custom was, neighbours gathered to visit during the wake, some remaining to have light refreshments, a drink or a smoke – whiskey, cigarettes, snuff and tobacco being provided.

The long night began to tell on Marge, so she decided to go to bed. More turf was piled on the open fire and still a few people came to pay their respects and say a prayer for Norr. As usual they entered the bedroom, prayed briefly and came back to the kitchen for a drink or some food. One small group coming from Roadford called late in the night. As usual they went in to pray. Suddenly there was a rush back out to the kitchen. They had mistakenly gone to the wrong bed to pray, and when Marge moved in the bed they thought it was Norr come back to life again. A glass of whiskey steadied their nerves – though they probably had enough already from their night in Roadford.

Memories of Doonagore Castle

Doonagore Castle is a good local landmark and using it to guide them, travellers from the Aran Islands safely navigated in to Ballaghane Pier. Images of the castle, with the wild Atlantic behind it have been used extensively by the likes of Tourism Ireland and other agencies for

years. However, in my youth, Doonagore was far different to what it is today. Walking out about ten yards from the front door of our thatched house in Ballyvara, I could see the castle silhouetted against the western sky and the sunset. There it stood, overlooking Galway Bay, the Aran Islands and the Twelve Bens of Connemara. The roof was flat – that's if it had a roof, because we were severely warned never to go into the castle as it was very dangerous because of falling stones and rocks. As I looked from Ballyvara, there seemed to have been a dark figure of eight on the tower. This was because it was breached where part of the eastern side had collapsed leaving two great holes. To my young mind it was like a black snowman on the side of the castle – a little frightening to a youngster.

Today all of this has changed. The breaches in the wall were repaired, a parapet was built, and a cone shaped roof surmounted by a weathercock has been added. The Castle was renovated and turned into a habitable dwelling in the 1960's by a Mr. O'Gorman who had returned from the United States.

Doonagore Castle is one of the five castles of Killilagh, the other four being Knockfin (site of the present Catholic chapel), Doonmacelim, Ballinalacken and Toomullin. In 1580 Doonagore Castle was owned by Sir Daniel O'Brien of Dough Castle near Lahinch. In 1837, Lewis described Doonagore castle as being 'a round castle on a square base.' An old legend tells that the three castles – Doonagore, Dunmacelim and Ballinalacken, were owned by three brothers. They were in sight of each other, and a warning fire on top of one of them brought help from the others in time of crisis. I don't know if this is purely a local story my father told me many years ago, as I don't know if it has any basis in history.

Doonagore Castle got its name from the little hills about that area. A family named Gore got ownership of the castle and lands in 1653, and some think that the name of the castle comes from that family. However, the name Doonagore was there long before the Gores arrived in Killilagh – 'The fort of the hillocks – Dun na gCor.'

West of the castle, in the shade of a little hill was a thatched house, where Mick Donoghue, Nagles' herdsman lived. Mick was an old man when I remember him about 1940-49. He had two sons – one was John. Mick had a broken rasping voice, probably strained from shouting after cattle and dogs in the Doonagore hills.

Music

Music was never far from us in Ballyvara. The O'Connor family next door whom we always called 'the Edwards' (the father being Edward Tom Dan) were talented musicians. Thomasheen (Sylvie) and Rory played the tin whistle and timber flute, while their mother played the concertina (She was a Conway from Cluana). Our family were not into instrumental music, but my father and my brother Thomas could be called on to sing a song on occasion. My father's song was 'God Save Ireland'. My brother Andy began to learn the concertina and went to Patty Flanagan (Patty Paitsín) in Cruck for a short while for lessons. Unfortunately, he had to go away to work and that ended his musical adventure. I remember Andy at home practising his first tune – 'The Rose of Aranmore'. My brother Peter who moved to Lisdoonvarna to live with my aunt Molly at a young age, learned to play the piano. Later he took up the accordion and became a very well-known and accomplished traditional musician.

In Fisherstreet, Willie Beg (Shannon) was a highly respected fiddle player and of course the Russell brothers, Miko, Pakie and Gussie were beginning a great era of Irish music locally. They lived below the little road from the castle towards Luogh – the low road as it was called to differentiate from the main road from Lisdoonvarna to the Cliffs. Close by the Russells over a little hill on the left Patty Flanagan lived. He taught the Russells a lot of their music.

Then on the old sea road from Nagles along the top of the cliffs, an old road led to Aill na Searrach, joining the main road beyond Luogh. The old ruins show that there were a number of houses on this old road at one time. Only one house was inhabited in my time – Connole's, not far from Trá Leathan (or Leachain). We always called them by their father's name (Jer Connole) – 'The Jurs'

The Connole family were always very friendly with our family I don't know if there was some old relationship there. I recall Michael coming one night – way out in the middle of the night, with some cattle – he and my father had planned to travel together to Ennistymon fair and had to be there very early. On occasion, Michael's brother Joe visited our house. He came in the evening, and if asked often enough, he would play a tune on the mouth organ. There was a long ceremony attached to his tune – he started by taking out the mouth organ from the inside pocket of his overcoat. It resembled a ball of woollen thread, and he unwound what looked like miles of twine from around the precious mouth organ. I cannot recall if he was any good to play, but after the music, he spent another hour putting the twine back around the mouth organ.

Another fiddle player was Martin Walsh of Lisheen, my aunt Nora's husband. When I lived with them in Lisheen I recall Martin taking down the fiddle and playing a tune. I once was at a

dance at Greene's of Moymore with my aunt. Martin was playing. The kitchen table was pushed back against the wall into a corner and Martin sat on a chair on top of the table, playing for the dances. That was the only time I ever saw him play in public, though, he often played at home in the evenings. Martin was taught the violin by Madigan of Ennistymon. In my time I remember Jack Madigan's band, so it must have been Jack's father that taught Martin.

Martin Walsh had a unique way of remembering his tunes. I sometimes wonder if it was his teacher, Madigan who came up with the idea. He had a few bawdy verses which had the perfect rhythm and beat of the more difficult tunes – tunes like the slip jig and other difficult ones. An example of these verses / tunes was:

*Barney had a ram
And his horns were made of brass
A horn grew out of his ear
And another grew out of his a...*

Martin enjoyed singing this with gusto, and after the verse, he'd swing in to the second part of the tune – the turn as he called it. Another intricate passage (I think it was a slip jig) he introduced with:

*Tom Tuttle didn't know that his father was
dead
And his father didn't know that Tom Tuttle
was dead.*

Not far from Walsh's was another musical family – the Kilourheys. In my time, and the following years, many musicians became prominent in the area. Of course, the famous Kilfenorea Ceili Band was not that far a way and Lisdoonvarna was a starting ground for many aspiring musicians, and a great encouragement for young people. When the tourist season was in full swing in Lisdoon, a musician was always welcome in any venue, day or night. Perhaps encouraged by that, and based

on past times, music was always highly regarded in Doolin.

I also recall PJ Lynch playing a few tunes on the fiddle when he lodged at Walshes. He would have been a relation of ours. He stayed with Walshes when he was working on repairs to Moymore Chapel and he later became a member of the Kilfenora Ceilí Band. My brother Peter was also a member of the Kilfenora Ceilí Band.

As well as traditional music, we had a gramophone at home, with a few well-worn old 78 records – mainly John McCormack and Delia Murphy. One beautiful day in July, our neighbours above the road were saving hay. Andy took out the gramophone, wound it up and put on a record. The hay-savers stopped at once, leaned on their forks and listened. When the record finished, they went back to their work turning the hay. The next record started, and they did the same. This happened repeatedly. There was very little hay saved that day.

The Russells

Doolin is famous the world over for Traditional Irish Music. It amuses me that a ‘bachelor farmer’ from Doonagore could be hailed in *The Journal of Music*, as ‘The Star of the Folk Revival’ (Keegan, 2015). The ‘unique and compelling’ musician whose double album was being discussed in the article (by the Associate Director at the *Irish World Academy of Music and Dance*) was no other than an old friend of mine Micho Russell.

The Russells were great friends of our family. I’ve always been proud that three men from Doolin came to be famous around the world. My daughter and two of my sons introduced themselves to Micho when he was giving a music masterclass at a ‘Festival Interceltique’ in Lorient, France in about 1985. What, a fantastic achievement for a

Junior Crehan & Micho Russell
Miltown Malbay, 1975
Courtesy of Clare County Library



humble and unassuming musician and storyteller from Doonagore. He loved when they reminded him of the time that he lulled my daughter to sleep with tunes on the tin whistle in her cot, when she was only a few months old.

The Russells were a good bit older than me, and there were five children Micho, Gussie (Austin), Pakie, Bridget and Mary-Kate. Their parents were Austin and Annie and they lived in a thatched house, quite like our own, overlooking the wild Atlantic and the Aran Islands. There was always music in their house. When he wasn’t working on the farm or delivering fish into Lisdoonvarna, Austin was singing and Annie was playing the concertina and singing too. Pakie followed his mother and played the concertina, while Micho and Gussie played the timber flute and tin whistle. It is said that the boys learned the basics of playing

from their neighbour Patty Flanagan who played the concertina, but they would have learned most of their tunes from listening to their parents and others around the area (Clare County Library, NDa).

Micho worked at whatever jobs he could find, such as farmwork or helping to repair roofs and Pakie and Gussie worked in the quarry in Doonagore. In the 1930s when Delargy was collecting material for the Folklore Commission, he recorded them playing music and telling stories, and soon after they were appearing on RTE radio and later television. While Pakie and Gussie were happy to stay at home, Micho loved entertaining people and he travelled widely, playing regularly in Dublin but also travelling far afield to London, Norway, Washington DC and elsewhere. He particularly liked helping young musicians to learn, being an active teacher at the Willy Clancy Summer School in Miltown Malbay or teaching a tune to an interested tourist. However, Micho loved nothing more than the ordinary life, playing a tune in O'Connor's in Fisherstreet, with his cap tipped back, joining other musicians, singing a few songs and telling stories.

Austin (Augustín) and Maggie

Austin and Maggie were always very good friends of our family. Austin, as he was called, or Augustín, was a Fitzgerald, and may have been a very distant relative. They were not our nearest neighbours as they lived in the house nearest the castle on our road. Austin and Maggie were hard-working people having only a few rushy fields – the place of two or three cows and a horse. The horse was very important, as Austin spent most of his time cutting and saving turf in Doonagore and in the wintertime he drew this turf to Lahinch. He sold the turf for £1 a creel.

Austin and Maggie had no family as they married late in life. Austin, who was a bachelor became ill once and had to spend some time in hospital in Ennis. It was there that he met Maggie who worked in the hospital. They married and everyone said that his illness was the best thing that ever happened to him as it was the cause of his meeting Maggie.

Austin was a tall lean bent old man when I knew him. He seemed older than Maggie. I recall his quiet kindness. His only reaction to any story or news was: 'Well holy Saint Jozef' – He had a peculiar way of pronouncing 'Joseph'.

I remember Maggie as a small little dumpty woman with grey hair and glasses. I don't know whether the sparkle was from her eyes or from the glasses, but she was a very lively alert little lady in high laced boots – very much the fashion among older people at that time. She wore a small black shawl over her shoulders, though in wintertime she wore the full large shawl. Maggie had a little snuff box and used snuff very often. The snuff box was actually a little oval Coleman's Mustard tin. The habit of taking snuff was dying out then and Maggie was one of the few I recall using it. She took a pinch of snuff from the box, placed it on the back of her hand and sniffed it. After seeing her violent fit of sneezing, I didn't have to be persuaded not to take any snuff.

Maggie loved politics. One had only to mention De Valera to get her really excited. She was at her best at election time, and loved an argument.

Maggie often visited our house. She always came before potato-sowing time to cut the seed potatoes – sciolans as she called them. She had her own special knife for this work. It was a broken kitchen knife with half a blade – very sharp and the handle was bound about with cloth.

Maggie looked after us when our parents needed to go anywhere. I more than anyone else in the family seem to have spent a lot of time there. Adjoining Maggie & Austin's house was Nagle's 'Curragh' – a wet marshy piece of land as the name implies. A double stone wall separated the two properties and against this wall Austin built his rick of turf. From several decades – maybe centuries, a hump of turf-dust had formed all along by this wall – a great place for dandelions. Maggie spent many hours cutting these dandelions, sometimes a whole large scuttle full, to feed her pig. She mixed the dandelions with the meal or whatever food she was using to feed the pig.

The first time I ever saw false teeth was at Maggie's. I came home one evening with the amazing story that Maggie had 'taken out her top lip' and put it up on the dresser! I had to live with my family retelling that story for many years after.

If by chance Maggie ever heard a person passing wind, she would triumphantly announce 'that's another pound out of the doctor's pocket'! So, from my earliest years I learned how healthy it was to pass wind, but sometimes, I felt really sorry for poor Doctor O'Dea – how would he ever survive with the loss of all those pound notes!

Of all the old-style thatched houses I remember, Austin and Maggie's was the most quaint. It had an open-hearth fireplace, the fire at ground level. In the corner of the kitchen behind the door was a chicken coop, often with a hen hatching. Turf was kept in a scuttle and a little hand broom made from heather was always beside the fire to sweep in the ashes or any stray 'caoráns' that might fall out. The horse's tackling was hanging over the coop – the collar, the straddle, the britchen. The house itself had that earthy scent which thatched houses have. It was a snug warm house and Austin kept the súgán chairs in good repair. The plates, cups and mugs on the dresser gleamed in

the firelight. Sometimes Austin would take home some bog deal for the fire, and the scent of its resin as it burned, filled the whole kitchen. Austin had a garden patch along beside the road where he grew potatoes and cabbage. It always fascinated me that the soil in that garden was very black – much darker than any of our fields.

I recall one night visiting Austin and Maggie with my parents. They talked a lot, and the old couple promised to give me 'the place' if I stayed with them. At first, this interested me, and I said I would, but when it came time for my parents to go home, I decided to go home too. I don't really remember what age I was at that time, but I still remember the kindness and gentleness of that lovely old couple.

Gone to the Dogs!

I spent about four years living with my aunt Nora and her husband Martin Walsh in Lisheen (c.1942–1947). While I say Lisheen, they actually lived in the townland of Rannagh, but we usually referred to it as Lisheen ... or Moymore, which was the local church and school, both being in the parish of Liscannor.

Liscannor was the first Greyhound Coursing event of the year, there was always an interest in Greyhounds in the area about Lisheen, Liscannor and Ennistymon. I recall being at that coursing once, in a large flat field in Clahane, in view of St. Bridget's Well and the ruins of Birchfield House, the former home of Cornelius O'Brien. The coursing activity was mainly up at the start where the dogs were assembled with the boxes containing the hares, the slipper and the owners. The hares were trained beforehand so that when released they would head for the other end of the field to safety in pens behind sheaves of corn.

For weeks prior to the coursing, members of the club were out netting hares to have for the great day. Hares were plentiful then and there was hardly a field without a hare or two to distract the dogs when they were sent to get the cows in at milking time. The great success in those years was the famous 'Robert Robinson', a greyhound that went to the Waterloo Cup and was owned by Waltie McHugh of Liscannor. It did much to revive interest in the dogs. This success triggered great enthusiasm and many locals began to rear and train greyhounds. Martin Walsh was one of those people who decided to invest in a greyhound – the pot of gold was almost in sight!

Martin's mentors were Bob Reynolds of Ennistymon and Tommy Connell of Moymore, and I recall visiting both their houses when Martin was enquiring about greyhounds. I'm not sure where he bought the puppy, but he gave it the inspiring name of 'Flash'. Of course, the dog had another much more grandiose name officially when in competition – something like The Lisheen Dasher, but about the house, however, it was 'Flash' – by name, though not so much by nature!

I recall being sent over to Tommy Connell, past the school in Moymore, with the greyhound, Martin's pride and joy, to be vetted. I'm sure I was only about eight or nine years at the time, and my terror was that a hare might cross the road. If he spotted a hare, I'd never be able to hold Flash, as he was almost as tall as myself. Anyhow, we got there safely, and Tommy vetted the dog approvingly, so we got home safely.

I doubt if anyone in the house was as well fed as Flash. I watched Martin cut up large slabs of the finest steak and also giving raw eggs to the dog, rubbing him down and exercising him every evening after his run.

Behind Walsh's house was Hartigan's field – later Jimmy O'Donnell's. It was a large flat field, ideally suited for training a greyhound, and it was in this field that Martin trained his prize beast. He had a rabbit skin bundled up on the end of a long string. I was sent to the far end of the field where I put the string through a hole in the stone wall leaving the decoy rabbit in the field where Flash could see it. I myself crossed the wall, crouched down behind it, giving a little chuck to the rabbit. Martin held the greyhound, and when he saw the rabbit bouncing at the far end of the field, he unleashed Flash. Of course, the dog came at top speed, but before he reached the wall, I had pulled away the rabbit. Still I was very scared – a greyhound at full speed could be dangerous for a small boy.

Like many, I don't think Martin had any luck with the greyhound. – at least, he never got a second one. I recall hearing about Shelbourne Park and Harold's Cross, and Martin did take Flash there, but I didn't hear about his success. If he had won anything notable, I'm sure I'd have heard about it. Unfortunately, Flash didn't live up to his name.

Thinking back on the Liscannor coursing, one of my most vivid memories is that of the impressive horseman who patrolled the field, up and down watching the dogs and the progress of the chase. I think that the dog which first turned the hare and turned it the most times was the winner. This is what the horseman was judging. I always hoped that the hare would get away. There is nothing as blood – curdling as the plaintive screech of a hare being caught and mauled by a couple of greyhounds – just like the scream of an infant, something awful, never to be forgotten.

Hares were very plentiful back at home in Ballyvara too. When my brothers – Paddy, Thomas, Andy and Jerry – were at home during the war years, (1939–1945) the favourite Sunday pastime was hunting. I recall seeing up to twenty-

five or thirty young men crossing our fields with a rare assortment of dogs – sheepdogs, terriers, greyhounds, all kinds of mongrels - out hunting on a Sunday afternoon. They usually travelled towards Luogh, spread out across the fields, hoping to ‘rise’ a hare or a fox. I recall going as far as the Cliffs of Moher one Sunday – to White’s Hill, below the Stable Gates (now an elegant interpretive centre). That particular day we got nothing, though there were plenty of rabbit burrows in White’s Hill itself. Curiously, no girls ever took part in the hunting, it would have been seen as a totally unsuitable pastime for them.

One hunt I remember very well. It was a fox hunt and began somewhere near the castle. It came across Quinlan’s, and Edward’s and then Leary’s field, along the foot of the hill, between the hill and our road. We all ran out when we heard the shouting. The fox was out in front and the dogs next with the men after them yelling and shouting. Just over Queally’s the fox crossed a stone wall into Kelly’s. He jumped back and forth over the wall a couple of times hoping to elude the dogs. Martin Shannon and his brother, Willie, had a good greyhound at the time, and it was this dog that eventually caught the fox about fifty yards above Kelly’s house. We all went up to see the dead fox.

My father often complained that hunting ruined the dogs. When they were sent down the fields for the cows, if they got the scent of a hare, they were off following the scent, and forgot the cows, no matter what calling or whistling was done. We had a very clever sheepdog – Fido – for many years, though towards the end, he was so old and lazy that he wouldn’t bother even to chase a hare if he saw one.

Nowadays, things have changed. The way of farming has changed drastically. Few farmers

have working dogs, and therefore, the hares that live in the area now have few dogs to disturb them.

Hartigan’s Shop in Lisheen (Moymore)

Hartigan’s Shop, and the fields behind it, were run by Jimmy O’Donnell. I think that Jimmy had inherited or rented the property from a relative named Hartigan, who had built the shop. It was in fact a small dwelling house and when one entered the main door, there was a very small porch with doors leading left into the shop and right into the kitchen. Jimmy lived and carried out his business in both those rooms, some of his goods spilling over from the little shop on to the forms and chairs by the window of the kitchen.

The shop contained mainly animal feeding stuff – pollard, bran, as well as an assortment of tools sticking up out of a wooden butter firkin. These included pitchforks, hay rakes, spades, shovels, a sleán or two, a pickaxe and a large axe for splitting bog deal and branches of trees. The overall smell was one of must and the floor was generally scattered with feedstuffs as well as flour. Jimmy also stocked cigarettes, tobacco, matches, and sweets in large glass jars. One was never sure if goods would be in stock as these were the war years (1939–1945) and everything was either rationed or very scarce. I recall once having to walk to O’Dea’s shop in Kilmacrehy near Liscannor for ropes to secure haycocks as Jimmy had run out of supplies.

As the war progressed, Jimmy became more involved in collecting butter from the local farmers. He packed the butter into little round barrels called firkins, each containing about five or six stone weight. When full and well packed down, each firkin was sealed, and the lid nailed on. Jimmy then delivered his load of butter to the

West Clare railway station in Ennistymon to be taken away and exported. He made this delivery of about eight or ten firkins fortnightly, and when butter was more plentiful, on a weekly basis. Being partial to a pint, Jimmy remained late in Ennistymon and the grumbling rattle of the iron cartwheels on the potholed road announced his return, normally after dark. His old black horse knew the road home, as Jimmy sang his way back to Lisheen.

The Shop was the meeting place for all the young men and boys of the neighbourhood. Here they gathered on summer evenings and weekends to play 'pitch-and-toss' outside the front door, or to throw horseshoes. There was little else for them to do, and the stakes were low – both money and work were very scarce in those days. It was unthinkable that girls would be seen in this group. It was strictly a man's world.

As my aunt's house was only fifty yards below the shop, I spent much of my free time there. This was frowned upon by my aunt who feared that I might 'learn more than my prayers up there'. I thought the world of Jimmy, as he almost always had a few sweets put aside for me. At times I had to wait until 'Geary's man' came in his van to replenish the stores. My aunt need not have worried about me either. If any of the boys went a little too far for young ears, Jimmy would edge in and show his displeasure with 'Ah Jaysus now lads, give over that now ... ye know what I mean ...' Though not much older than the group, he commanded their respect, and they never went too far with their tricks and antics.

I recall a time that the group had a guessing game as to my weight. The big scoop was taken out, and I was found to weigh four stone and a ball of ropes!!

People came from far and near to Jimmy's shop. I recall a teenager from the Ballycotton side of Moymore coming there. I did not know him personally in the beginning because I attended Moymore school while he attended Ballycotton school where Mick Greene taught. He was a very gifted boy – and I think his name was Devitt. The boys would sometimes get him to recite while they listened in admiration to 'The Oration of Pearse at the Grave of O'Donovan Rossa'. I still recall his words:

It seems right, before we turn away from the place where we have laid the mortal remains of O'Donovan Rossa, that one among us should, in the name of all, speak the praise of that valiant man, and endeavour to formulate the thought and the hope that are in us as we stand around his grave ...

None of his listeners could equal him in memory or ability to recite, but they all listened and looked up to this boy, and 'still they gazed and still their wonder grew'. Another of his recitation pieces was 'Emmett's Speech from the Dock'.

I sometimes wonder where that boy went, or what he did. If he is still alive, he would be close to ninety years now,

But gone is all his fame.

The very place where he once he triumphed is forgot.

The Black Goat.

Our black goat had to go!

That was final! For years she had a lonely existence, grazing among the cows in the fields below the house, totally oblivious of them and they of her. This was a common enough scene all over Ireland. A goat or two among a herd of cattle

was not unusual. Some thought that the goats brought good luck; more practical people felt that the goats ate up the ragwort, ivy and other noxious weeds which could harm other livestock; yet others saw the goat as a provider of very good nourishing milk in the latter end of the year when the cows were in-calf and dry. Whether through sentiment or for more mundane reasons, the old practice of having a goat with a herd of cattle has lasted, down to recent times.

Occasionally our black goat wandered into the vegetable plot in the high haggard beside the house, but these incursions were few and consequently, not very annoying. The last straw was when she chewed the cuffs of my father's best Sunday shirt on the whitethorn bush, which had been left out to dry. She simply had to go. Whether it was through sentiment and regard for the old custom, or through gratitude for providing milk in the hard, bygone times, my father was still loath to see her go. Her fate was sealed however, when my brother Andy discovered a buyer for the goat.

So, it was, that on a summer evening we set off for Doonagore with her, Andy leading with a rope about the goat's horns and I pushing when she baulked or tried to turn aside into one of the many field openings along the way. Normally we would have taken the short cut up across the hill, coming out close to the Lisdoonvarna / Cliffs of Moher road below Cnoc a'Mhuilleán. This was not possible now, as there were many walls and stiles on that route. So, we had to keep to the main road. We passed Doonagore castle and began the climb up the hills until we reached Doonagore Lake (a body of water, which has been long since drained). The short journey from here to our destination was on the flat and much easier.

Daisy Burgess stood at her door shading her eyes from the evening sun. She was a slight woman

with blond hair which tumbled down over her face as she bent forward to rub the goat's head and neck talking gently all the time and ignoring Andy and me. This was a new experience for me – and also for the goat, I thought. The only time we talked to the black goat was when her wayward nature took her into the vegetable plot and then our shouts were not at all endearing.

Daisy stood up, seeming very happy. She and Andy discussed the price and settled on three shillings and sixpence. She seemed happy with the bargain and disappeared into the house. Returning, she counted the money into Andy's hand. I noticed that she also gave him a brown paper bag, the contents of which we later discovered to be a very large bar of chocolate about six inches by four and more than a quarter of an inch thick. One must remember that this was in the early 1940's in the middle of the Great War (1939-1945) when chocolate was a very rare commodity indeed.

Having said goodbye to Daisy and the black goat, we set off for home. We sat on a stone at the lake, looking down on Doonagore Castle, Crab Island and the Aran Islands, to examine the contents of the paper bag. The bar was divided into small square subsections, so we broke off two little pieces. This chocolate was very different to any we had ever seen or tasted! It was a very dark in colour and the smell was reminiscent of the cocoa we got in school at wintertime. As the little square dissolved in my mouth it became very bitter and I spat it out in disgust. Andy managed to eat his square, but I had enough. No more dark chocolate for me!! That incident was probably the cause of my not eating dark chocolate to this day!

When we got home there was a lot of tasting and testing this new and unusual treat. My father thought it was probably very nutritious and certainly foreign – German, probably, as Daisy Burgess was looked on locally as a probable

German spy. Why else would she have come to the inhospitable area of Doonagore, and settled there during the war years in such windswept hardship? Whatever the misgivings about the origin of the chocolate, it was eaten with relish by most of the family.

Skipping forward sixty years - Daisy once again surfaced in my life. I was amazed to read her obituary in the *Irish Times* on Sat. July 17th 2010. I learned that Elizabeth Daisy Burgess died at the great age of 107 and was buried in Mount Jerome cemetery, Dublin. She had been born in India on September 29th. 1902 and died on April 27th. 2010

A fascinating detail mentioned in her obituary was that she liked milk:

She never touched alcohol; milk was her drink and she would leave a glass a number of days before drinking it – she believed that this kept her healthy (Irish Times, 2010).

Now I know why Daisy Burgess was so glad to have purchased our black Goat. Maybe that wonderful animal was the reason she lived to be such a great age.

Threshing

Andy Curry was from Moymore. He lived down the road from Martin Walsh and Nora. A brother of his had a son who was a vet, who was tragically killed by a bull. Andy also had a sister Bridgie, who was married to Tommy Kelly who lived beside Martin and Nora.

The important thing about Andy was that he had a Threshing Machine and his engine with two horses came to our field above the house and I saw a Threshing. I was amazed to see the ‘stooks of corn’ being turned into grain.

They set up a drum with long arms out of it, and the poor old horses were tethered to the ‘arms’ and spent the day going ‘round and ‘round. The boom coming out of the drum and the Threshing Machine spitting out the grain from one end, and the straw out the other was a hypnotic scene to watch.

One of Martin’s sisters married Tom Frawley a publican in Lahinch. The other married Hayes in Ennistymon. A grandson of theirs, taught my own children in Secondary School in Killaloe.

Stories from Bridie Griffin

A good number of years ago, I told my sister Bridie that I was planning to write about Doolin. I asked her to send me some of her memories. A little while later she got her daughter Geraldine to record a number of stories - the following are some of her recollections.

It is one of my biggest regrets that I didn’t get this book into print during her lifetime. However, I’m certain she is shining down on us and giving a wry little smile, that her stories are now in print for future generations to enjoy.

The Black and Tans (18 Nov 2012, Boston)

You would look out there was a road, a long road down, and you’d see them coming up the road. You’d see the ... trucks, they called them lorries. And they’d come into every house. And ... they would have a roll call. Everybody had to have the names behind the door ... of the people who lived there. Whoever lived in your house, you’d have all the names behind the door. ... They’d call off the names to make sure everyone was there. And then you were safe if they were. If not ... ‘But where are they’? They might be out fighting the ‘tans’ ... [fighting with the] groups that would ambush them and try to get rid of them.

But oh my god, I can remember. I was maybe 2 years old hiding under my grandmother, who would be sitting by the fire, hiding under her chair. She'd pick me up and just hide me, you know, from them. It was so scary. It was horrible. They [did] all kinds of bad things.

I had an uncle here (in the US) whose wife was in the hospital. They had 5 kids. So my grandmother and my father (Darby) who wasn't married at the time, wrote to him and said 'send them home and we'll take care of them' and that's what they did. He took the 5 kids back home to my grandmother and she raised them for the next 10 or 12 years until he was able to take care of them.

The oldest son, he got involved with the IRA. They were fighting the tans. And the tans were looking for him. And I was told about the time they came to our house. This is a few years after the kids got there. My father [was then] married. They had me. I was 10 months old at the time and they came and wanted to know from my father, where was Joe? Joe was the oldest kid, from America, you know.

And my father said, well, he couldn't tell him ... maybe he didn't know. He just said he didn't know where he was. But if he did know where he was they'd go find him and they'd kill him because that's what they were out to do because he was fighting them. He refused to tell them. He told them he didn't know. He had no idea where Joe was. He hadn't seen him for a couple of weeks.

They threw him on the ground - and you know what they would do - they would throw oil on the body, on the person and set them on fire. And that's what they did. You know the McCurtins. Kevin [my son] worked with them at Harvard. Well their grandfather, that's what they did to him. And they made his wife and five kids stand in front of the door ... they threw the McCurtin father on the ground, threw oil on him and set him on

fire. And there was nothing anybody could do. That is how bad they were.

Anyhow, this time, they surrounded him (my father - Darby) and took aim with their rifles preparing to kill him. So anyway, my mother had me. I was 10 months old by now and she's pregnant with my brother and she ran in front of my father and she said 'Well, if he has to go we'll all go'. They were really bad people but there was one guy who they said must have had a heart. And he said 'No, don't do it'.

Then they set fire to all - we use to save hay back then for the cattle and they had huge, as big as the house, reeks of hay in back of the house in a field. And they set fire to the whole place ... everything, and the cows were in the barn and the cows got smothered from the smoke. And it was just a miracle that my father was alive. Everything he had was ruined but he was alive.

But that's what they were like. They were horrible.

Oh you know what they did to Delia. She was my friend here in America. She was older than me. Well she was a teenager by that time and she lived not far from us. And they came and they were asking her questions. And the kid didn't know. She was about 14 or 15. She had beautiful blonde hair. And her mother had never cut her hair. She always let it grow. So they gave her a boy's haircut. They cut her hair off completely. I remember her telling me about that. It was disgusting. But she was lucky that's all they did to her. They didn't kill her.

They were bad news. Thank God it doesn't happen anymore. The church had a lot to do with it - and of course, the King.

O'Connor's Shop (8 Apr 2013, Boston)

The O'Connors. They had the shop ... My father would send us down for tobacco ... And back then we never had money Nobody

had money.

And once in a great while it was a big deal if my father gave us a penny for candy. And when we got the penny that was very valuable. We always wanted to go to O'Connors because if we went to Maggie Cusack or Considines in Roadford or into Lisdoon ... anywhere you'd go with your penny, you got 8 toffees for a penny. They counted them, 8. You'd go and John O'Connor gave you 10! It was really good. He was so generous.

This is O'Connor's in Fisher Street where they had the pub and a shop?

Yes, Gussie's pub. Well the shop was right in with the bar. They only had a few things in the shop. But the candy. We'd go by Maggie Cusack and we wouldn't want her to see us. We'd go under the window so she wouldn't see us.

Where was her shop?

It was halfway from the corner to O'Connors. She'd get mad with you if you didn't buy your candy off her.

So who would get a penny? Would each kid in your family get a penny from your dad?

If one kid got a penny once a week we'd share whatever we had. If we were lucky, you know.

And did you share with the neighbours? Did you share with the Queallys or Dohertys?

Oh no. You only had 10 toffees. You might have it eaten before you got home because you wouldn't get a penny again. Nobody's going to share with you because they haven't got it.

That's what I always remember about John O'Connor.

He was really good.

Stories from Catherine E. Currier

(a.k.a. Kathleen Griffin)

Howley's Cross and other Memories - October 12, 2020

The first house coming from Howley's Cross was Yom's. I don't know his real name, it was just Yom [in fact it was John Shannon]. He was an older man, we very rarely saw him. Later it belonged to Willie Shannon and his brother Martin. They were very, very nice people. My brother Kevin and I spread potatoes for the Shannons when the garden was ready. They were supposed to be about 8" to 10" apart. We were known to cheat a bit and go further to save time - we were caught and we behaved after that.

On the left [opposite Yom's] the first house was Kelly's, at the top of the hill. Later on they built a new house closer to the road. Jo Kelly was the youngest, Agnes was a couple of years older. They went to school with me. Later, Agnes went to the United States. Mary Ann married Martin Doherty, Aunt Nell's son.

I wouldn't have met all of the older Queallys. There was Paddy, Mary, Margaret, Christy, John, Tim, Jim, Martin, and Joe. Joe was my first very young friend. Both of us were born in February 1933, two weeks apart. He was always at our house, we were always together. His mother, Annie Queally's maiden name was Rynne. She came every day and had tea with my mother. They would have tea, bread, butter and jam, or scones or sweet loaf - bread with raisins. I always braided her hair. At that time, Tim, Jimmy, Martin, and Joe were living at home. They all went to the US later.

The Rynnes were from the Liscannor area and Annie had a sister Mary who married my Uncle Peter (my father's brother). They had five children, Joseph, Theresa, Susan, Gerald, and John. I left Ireland in February or March 1946 at the age of 14 to live in

Winthrop, Massachusetts, with Theresa. All of my family used to call her 'Aunt Theresa' even though she was actually a cousin. My children used to laugh when Theresa would say that her mother was a Rynne, as they thought she was saying 'wren'.

Doherty's was next. Aunt Nell (Ellen Griffin Doherty, my father's sister) who I loved and stayed with after Mairead married. Aunt Nell never missed a day coming across the field to our house. She was always humming. Mattie, Martin, and Packie were home. Mairead later came home from England. She and her brother T.J. were my godparents. T.J. was in the Merchant Marine in England. When Mairead married, I stayed with Aunt Nell.

Aunt Nell was called on when people died - she would lay them out. She was well prepared. She had a habit to dress the deceased in, and rosary beads in case the family had none. Sometimes it was late at night and I went with her. I loved it - over the road and across fields. She went into the room where the body was and did her thing, and I was in the kitchen having orange drink and biscuits. I thought it was great. Aunt Nell always wore a black shawl, she was small and she always held my hand.

Next to our house was Edward O'Connor. My memory from that house was when Teresa was about six, she went over there and Nora, Edward's wife, cut her hair very short. She had long, curly hair and it was braided. Everyone in our house was so unhappy about that.

Maggie and Augustine were the last house on the right. Maggie often came to our house and she used snuff. It was brown and it made her sneeze. Her nose was often brown right down to her top lip. I often took her to Considine's in the ass and car (donkey cart) for her pension and to get groceries. She was fun and weird - very excitable and

had a very simple way about her. I thought she was a lot of fun.

My first day of school Andrew took me. He, Jerry, and I were going. Jerry always waited for me and made sure I crossed the river okay. One day I was crying in the school yard, I had forgotten my lunch. He was in the boy's part of the school yard, but he saw me, called me over, and gave me his lunch. That was Jerry, so kind and watching over me. I never forgot it.

My class in school was Catherine Davenport, Bridie Shannon, Mary Maher and Kathleen Crawford.

The boys had a male teacher and were upstairs. The girls had two teachers, downstairs. Miss Blood had the 'infants' or younger kids. She was always nice to me but a tyrant to the other kids; Mairead Doherty married her brother.

Miss Lyons was very tough, she had the older kids, and she would punish them. They would hit your hand, purposely on the wrist.

You'd be in school all day and would bring your lunch - bread and jam, or bread and butter. In the summer the men worked in the bogs and the kids would bring them bread and butter and a bottle of tea with a sock over the bottle to keep it hot.

The days were so long, and the people were always working. In the mornings they'd milk the cows and take the milk to the creamery with the donkey and cart. Later they were working saving hay or at the bog.

You would always know everybody traveling on the road, always by donkey and cart. You'd very rarely see strangers - everybody knew each other.

In the summers I would go to my grandmother's house - The Fitzgeralds who lived in Lismorohaun / Caherbullog in

the Burren. It was 9 miles, and we always walked. We'd stop at Lisdoonvarna, at my Aunt Molly's, and I got an ice cream at the store. My brother Andrew was with me when I first went, at age six, and he told me not to bite the ice cream or I'd get a toothache. I always remember that. Later Kevin and I went for a few more years. We loved going there. It was a great big house and the bedrooms were upstairs. It was the only house I ever was in that had an upstairs.

It was a very special time in my life.

John Carey (Seán Cairiún), Lúch 1930

© The Irish Folklore Commission



John Carey (85) and Séamus Ó Duilearga, Luogh, 16 May 1978 © The Irish Folklore Commission



Seán Ó Carúin, Luach 1935

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Neighbours of Paitsín Ó Flannagáin

© The Irish Folklore Commission



Quarries & Mines

‘Liscannor’ Stone

A short article by Katherine Dillon in the 1953 volume of the *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* offers a quirky insight taken from *The Report of Donald Stewart*, ‘Itinerant Mineralogist’ to the Dublin Society. Stewart was a Scotsman who was employed to explore Ireland for fossils and minerals, and in 1788, he was directed to travel through County Clare, ‘under the orders of Sir Lucius O’Brien, Bart.’ searching for useful minerals and fossils, which were shipped back to the Society in Dublin:

In the demesne of Doollin, near the bay of Galway, is a large course of flour-spar, and some metal in it, probably tin. I believe it is the only flour-spar ever before found in Ireland. On the seashore of Doollin are remarkable large blocks of very black and solid Lime-stone fit for chimney pieces (Dillon, 1953:189).

It is difficult to know however, when commercial mining and quarrying began in the area. When the First Edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1840s) were produced, there was evidence of a number of quarries around the parish, some disused but none very big. Halpin (2003) dates the first references to commercial quarries to 1808 and suggests that a reference in the 1845 *Practical Geology & Ancient Architecture of Ireland* is the first time that quarrying of stone in the Liscannor area is referred to in print. She goes on to discuss a ‘boom’ in stone production in the period 1890 to 1910 in the townlands of Moher, Caherbarnagh, Luogh South and Doonagore. Work was mainly undertaken by English companies who came from the Rossendale region of Lancashire, with G.A. Watson & Co at Doonagore operating one of the largest quarries, covering thirty acres with three workings. To facilitate movement of stone, Watsons constructed about three miles of railway,

Roofs of Moher at Luogh 1954 © The Irish Folklore Commission



Main St. Liscannor

© National Library of Ireland Ref: L_ROY_08753



which operated from approximately 1903-1915 in their Doonagore works. For railway enthusiasts, Johnson (1997) notes that this was a 4ft 8½ inch gauge ‘tramway’ with steam locomotive.

Around 1909, following the merger of a number of quarry companies across Britain and Ireland, the stoneworks in Doonagore, Luogh and Caherbarnagh came under the management of the newly formed United Stone Firms Ltd. In 1912 the company produced a ‘Firms Brochure’ which outlined their commercial activities. A lovingly produced centenary reproduction of this text was published in 2012 by the Forest of Dean Stone Firms Limited. This book contains a comprehensive overview of the 1912 operations, accompanied by some spectacular photographs.

Operating under the name of Shamrock Stone, the company was extracting ‘clean, close grained Blue Grey Mill-stone Grit’. The report claims that:

The self faced Flags are world famed, and cannot be surpassed for quality and wear ... They are unquestionably the very best natural Stone Flags produced anywhere ... it is harder and superior to Granite ... it is the very best Stone obtainable ... Shamrock Stone does not wear slippery, and is admirably adapted for heavy traffic.

The stone was transported to Liscannor and sent by the company’s own steamers to any destination required. The main markets were the railways of England, in particular the Great Western Railway, where it was used for paving, steps and platform copings. The company was very proud that their product had been used in the Royal Mint, the National Art Gallery and ‘numerous Post Offices’. They finish their celebration of Shamrock Stone with the statement that ‘demand is constantly and rapidly increasing’. Sadly, this did not last, and in a short few years, large-scale commercial production in the quarries ceased - some time around the outbreak of World War 1. However, after the English companies departed, quarrying did not die out entirely. In 1966 an English entrepreneur called Harold Phillipson resumed

Liscannor Harbour

Left: © National Library of Ireland Ref: L_ROY_08756 / Right: today



The photographs here show **The Shamrock Stone Company** as presented in the 1912 **United Stone Firms Ltd book**, reprinted by the Forest of Dean Stone Firms Limited in 2012.

All photos © the Forest of Dean Stone Firms Limited who have granted permission for their reproduction (see <https://www.fodstone.co.uk/about/united-stone-firms-book/>).

Offices and Stables, Doonagore



Post Office and Property at Doonagore



Storage Ground, Liscannor



Workmen's Cottages, Doonagore



Caherbarnagh Quarry, Co Clare



No. 3 Quarry, Doonagore



No 2 Quarry Doonagore



Decorative Cover of
United Stone Firms Book



No. 3 Quarry Face, Doonagore



General View of No 2 Quarry, Doonagore



South Luogh Quarry, Co. Clare



Original United Stone Firms Book



Abandoned Quarry and Buildings, Doonagore, 2020



quarrying commercially in Luogh. Phillipson paid £15,000 for his quarry to be connected to the ESB electricity network, and after some changes in ownership, this quarry evolved into the present Liscannor Stone Company. My first cousin Matty Doherty, son of my aunt Nell, worked for this company and I'm told he was a first-class craftsman.

It is difficult to believe nowadays that the pier at Liscannor was once one of the busiest small ports in the west of Ireland. Stone from the surrounding area was loaded onto ships and sent to cities such as London and Liverpool, where it was used for paving (coal was brought into the area on the return journey). This trade of three slightly different stone products (Moher, Liscannor / Doonagore and Hag's Head Stone), promoted by the English businesses would have encouraged the locals to learn the English language as a means of communication, as would the influx of English-speaking workers who moved into the area to manage and run the quarries and train local workers. It is suggested that there were 500 men working in the stone quarries of the area at one time.

The Elizabeth McLea

An interesting chapter in the history of Liscannor and the transportation of local Stone was the running aground of the two-masted wooden Brigantine called the Elizabeth McLea (mistakenly

The Elizabeth McLea

(Image courtesy of The Ian Lawler Collection)



referred to as the Elizabeth McLean in a number of reports). Built in 1860 in Greenock, near Glasgow by Robert Steele & Company, for McLea & Son, Greenock, this wooden sailing ship is described in some reports as being 58 ft, but is listed as being 99.7ft in her official registration records. The ship was stranded in Liscannor Bay in a storm on 28th December 1894. There is confusion about this date, with some records claiming that it ran aground in 1904, however, the following entry from *The Freemans Journal*, Tuesday, January 1, 1895 is unequivocal:

Wreck on Clare Coast: Rescue of Crew

Limerick, Monday. On Friday morning a severe gale was blowing from the north-west, which increased in violence as the evening approached. The brigantine vessel Elizabeth McLea of Bristol owned by her Captain James Horan of Arklow put out from Liscannor to sea at six a.m. on Friday laden with flags from the Liscannor quarries.

When midway in the bay a gale was blowing strongly which gradually increased and at eight a.m. the crew were obliged to cast anchor. At 5.50 p.m. the anchor chain snapped on the southern side and the vessel drifted in on the Lahinch strand at the northern side of the village and there got embedded in the sand.

At this time the sea was running so high the crew had to take to the rigging or else they would have been swept overboard At eight p.m. the tide was ebbing and the crew were able to go down on deck from their perilous position. They threw up a signal which was seen by the Lahinch constabulary and Sergeant Hourihan with Constable Moynihan, Young and Connor at once proceeded to the rescue.

They succeeded in nearing the vessel being to their waists in water, and by the aid of a rope were successful in bringing the crew safely on shore. They immediately brought the rescued men to the barrack where they

provided them with food, stimulants and dry clothing.

The coastguards arrived on the scene at 1.30 a.m. but at this time all that could possibly have been done was performed by the constabulary. No attempt was made to reboard the vessel until 11 a.m. on Saturday morning, when the crew accompanied by Sergeant Hourihan with Constables Sullivan, Connor and others rendered every assistance in their power to save the wrecked property. The ship was not insured but the cargo was.

And there the ship rested until January 1998, when, due to a combination of Christmas storms and spring tide, the ship was uncovered and a local crowd gathered to watch a portion of the cargo being salvaged. It is reported that 30 tons of the overall estimated 200 tons were recovered by the salvagers, who stated the haul of kerbstones and flagstones were worth their weight in gold,

having antique value as they came from the now abandoned Doonagore Quarries.

As a child, I remember two pillars standing in the sea near the bridge to Lahinch. When I asked what they were, I was told they were monuments which were put there to commemorate two young priests who were drowned. I was told to say a prayer for them, and never go near the sea at that point. I now suspect that the two ‘monuments’ were the masts of the Elizabeth McLea, and the story of the drowned priests was a ‘cautionary tale’, to keep adventurous youngsters away from the sea, which is quite treacherous at that point.

Liscannor / Doonagore Stoneworkers

As a young man, my father worked in the Doonagore quarries and became an expert stone cutter. I have been told that he travelled to the Lake district in the North of England to learn about stone-cutting and quarrying. The English

Blank Gravestone in Ballyvara / McCormack Gravestone in Kilfenora Cathedral Graveyard: I believe these were both carved by my father. We were doubly related to the McCormacks. My grandmother Bridget and her brother Patrick McCormack of Tullagha, married Griffin siblings - Bridget, and her brother Darby Mór my grandfather.



Company operating in Doonagore sent him and I think it was Cárla (McMahon) who went with him. That would have been in early 1900s. They must have been very promising craftsmen.

My father was able to cut a headstone from a Moher flag, and there is one of these works of art outside our house in Ballyvara (now my nephew Thomas Griffin's farm) to this very day. It has been there for as long as I can remember (see photo). There are headstones of the exact same pattern, marking relatives' graves in Kilfenora Cathedral and in Killilagh graveyards. While I have no evidence that they are his work, I really think they are. He was never one to boast of his accomplishments - that would be the farthest from his mind.

Self Taught Sculptor

Another aspect of Doolin stonework is dealt with in a 1972 documentary on RTE television featured the work of sculptor Tom O'Connell from Doonagore (<https://www.rte.ie/archives/2018/0404/952084-clare-stone-carver/>). The programme notes that Tom was inspired by his surroundings, working in granite, marble, driftwood and limestone, to produce fascinating,

Mythological Stone Carving in Doonagore, 2020



primitive artworks influenced by Greek and Aztec mythology, Hopi Native American tribes and the poems of William Shakespeare. Tom's carvings were fantastically creative, and many of them are multi-dimensional, with the image depending on the viewpoint. I have a small green marble carving which Tom gave to me many years ago (see end of book) and I was delighted recently to hear that the carving in this picture is still watching over Tom's abandoned workshop in Doonagore.

Red and Blue Stonecutters Cottages in Doonagore, 2020



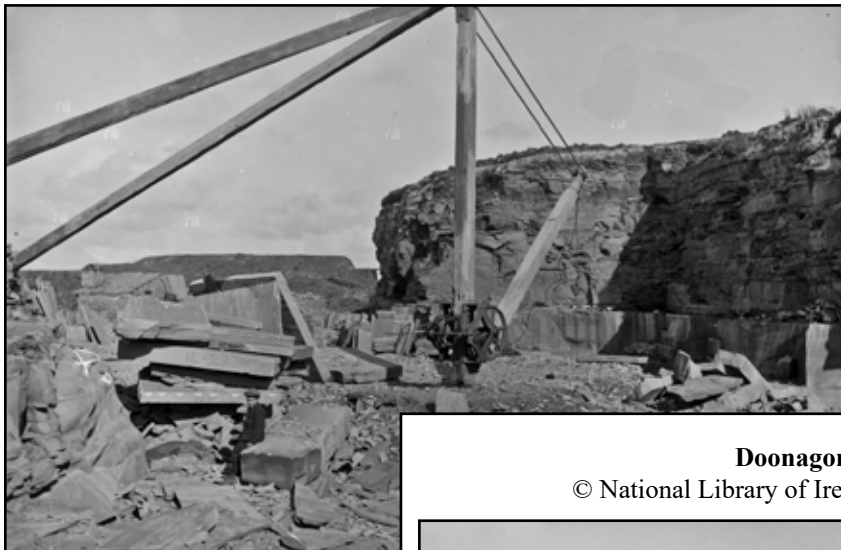
Doonagore (Village)

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Doonagore Quarry

© National Library of Ireland Ref: L_ROY_08760



Doonagore Quarry

© National Library of Ireland Ref: L_ROY_08758



Doonagore ‘Village’

The photographic evidence from the beginning of the 20th Century on previous pages, shows an entire village of very fine houses at the top of the hill in Doonagore. This lonely windswept landscape was once a busy place, which had a quarry office, shops and accommodation. All of these were built to facilitate the running of the quarries.

The Stonecutters Cottages

I remember a number of people living up near that ‘village’ in the cottages on the road from Doonagore to Lahinch. Around 1945 Daisy Burgess (discussed elsewhere) occasionally lived in one of the cottages as she came and went. Another female inhabitant was an old character by the name of O’Brien. She was an old woman when I was young, and she spent her time walking the roads. We used to call her Annie Rosie. I don’t know why, but if she was passing our house, we used to shout at her to annoy and tease her. My father came home one day and was told that we had been mean to her. His admonishment was ‘if you knew where that woman came out of, you wouldn’t call her names’. I don’t really know what that meant, but we behaved ourselves a little better after that.

Also, in the row of cottages lived a man called Connell. He had a bicycle and he used to cycle down past Walsh’s going to Lahinch, he was a very elegant man. I’m fairly certain that he lived on his own around the time I remember, but I think he had sons somewhere. What I remember of him was that he had the most exquisite moustache you ever saw. He used to put wax in it, and it was like two handlebars of a bike. As a child I was very impressed. Also, in those houses there was a man named Torpey. He was the one who took the cans off the donkeys and carts at Doolin Creamery down where Garrihy’s is now. He was

the assistant to the Creamery Manager. I note that this row of houses has been beautifully restored in recent years, and some of them are now available to rent. Nearby in other similar houses lived Dikey Salmon and in another lived Tony Connole and his father.

The Davorens

Up the side road beside the stonecutters cottages there was once an impressive row of houses. As far as I recall, the Davorens (Pauric and Const. and their sisters Katie Jackson and Janey Hayes) lived in the last few inhabitable houses in that row. The buildings visible in the Lawrence Collection and Shamrock Stone photos were mainly in ruin or entirely gone by my time.

In 1901, the Daverons / Davorins lived in Ballyfaudeen – just over the road from Doonagore. Judging by her then recorded age, their mother Bridget was born some time around 1850, and in 1901 she lived there with three grown up sons and two daughters, and kept two boarders who were stone cutters. All eight lived in a two-room thatched house.

When I remember them, they were all living in Doonagore. Katie lived in a small little house, and nearby her brothers and sister lived in one of the big two-story ones. Katie had married an English ‘Quarry Man’ called William Jackson, and according to the 1911 Census, they were then married for 4 years, and lived in ‘House 3’, which had four rooms and a slate roof. At that time, they had a daughter Jane, aged 2, who had been born in England, and they also kept boarders – a ‘Sett Maker’* called John McDonald (25 years) with his wife Annie (24), both from Wicklow and a Clare man, John Galvin (aged 55), another Quarry Man.

* A ‘sett’ is a rectangular cut stone used in paving, often mistakenly confused with ‘cobble stone’ which is a naturally shaped stone used for the same purpose.

The Davorens (Pauric, Const., Katie and Janey) were one of the families my father would visit on occasion. About once a month, particularly when it was a good clear night with a bright moon, he would walk up across the gorse to the top road, carrying me on his shoulders where the ground was a bit rough. From there, we'd head over to Doonagore. I'd loved to go with him when he was visiting as I was fascinated by these people. I don't know why at nine or ten years of age it amused me to sit for hours with these 'old' people as they told stories and 'traced' friends and family. It was possibly because I knew and had an interest in many of the people they talked about, as I had lived down in Moymore with my aunt Nora and uncle Martin for a couple of years.

Pauric was an extraordinary man. He had something about him that held great authority and he fascinated me. At that young age I thought that he sounded like an impressive law man. He was a big stout man with a walrus moustache. He'd sit up dead straight with a hand in his pocket and hold forth on whatever the topic of discussion was. It was many years later that I read about the ancient Ó Duibh dá Bhoireann who lived in Cahermacnaghten, to the east of Lisdoonvarna. These O'Davorens were ollamhs (experts in Brehon Law) to the O'Loghlens, are mentioned in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and ran a Law School in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see later section on education).

Pauric would mainly tell the stories and his sisters and brother would interject occasionally, though Janey and Katie would listen more than anything else. They'd tell local stories and talk about relatives and friends ... such a one who is now living in America ... when they went ... who they left behind ... tracing back for generations. I was fascinated by it,

Pádraic Davoren, The Quarries, Lúch 1930

© The Irish Folklore Commission



It is only as I recall these stories that I remember that Pauric was always referred to as 'Pauric Cosnaí' (this means his father was 'Cosnaí' or to translate it - Constance). This fascinating feature of families in Clare at that time (which we comment on elsewhere) was the continuous use of Christian names and linkage of multiple names to make sure a person's identity was handed down from generation to generation. It has been suggested that this tradition is linked to the ancient Irish tradition of status, and knowing one's 'honour price'; where you stood in society depended on your ancestors. In Doolin of that time, it was very normal for multiple names to be used together to denote lineage and family heritage. Just a few examples of the multiple names that I can think of are the likes of Autie Dathóg (Aughty, son of Daithí Óg), or my brother-in-law, Paddy O'Connor from Lough, who married my sister Annie – he was known as Paddy, Thomas, Tom – recording

both his father and grandfather's names. My own father was Darby Óg, to differentiate from his father who was also Darby. Darby is a derivative of Jeremiah, or Dermot. Curiously, there's a gravestone in Killilagh cemetery to a 'Dermot Griffey', born in 1732. His stone states that Dermot Griffey died in 1799 aged 68, and his headstone was erected by his sons, Dan and Andrew. While Dan is a curiosity in my family, there have been multiple Andrews in almost every generation of our Griffins. An unusual further example from my family was Seán Mhary Griffey who lived in 'Cruc'. This translates as Sean, son of Mary Griffey. Mary was my grandfather's sister, who married Seán Sweeney of Cruc. In our house, Sean (my dad's cousin) was never referred to as anything other than Seán Mhary Griffey. While I don't remember anything about him, I know he called to our house on a regular basis.

Back to the Davorens. My memory of Const, was of a lean strong man who was about ten years younger than Pauric. I remember him standing with a towel in one hand, his shaver in the other, shaving by candlelight in a mirror which was put hanging from the catch in the middle of the window frame. This seemed to be a slow and careful operation, but every now and then he would turn around and add to the story or discussion that was going on behind him, with witty, clever statements. Like his brother, he spoke with authority and nobody would dare contradict him. He always seemed to be getting ready to 'go out' when we called. This meant he was going to Fisherstreet to the pub. He also had a moustache, but unlike his brother's expansive facial hair, Const.'s was much tidier and he had what we would now call a 'Hitler' moustache. He didn't stay around for much of the chat, but he participated fully in the conversation until he 'went out'.

Const.'s real name was Constance, which further suggests a direct link to the historical O'Davorens of Cahermacnaughten since research on that family by George Unthank MacNamara, published in the *Journal of the North Munster Archaeological Society* in 1912-13 (p76), mentions record of a 'Constance', son of Hugh O'Davoern in 1677. This Constance was related to the former owner of, Cahermacnaughten and was descended from Aengus, King of Cashel, who was slain in 957.

The Const. I remember was famous for an altogether different achievement. When the Quarry in Doonagore was in session (he is listed in the census as being a blacksmith – an important skill in a busy quarry) and the siren went for the workers' lunchtime, all would 'down tools' for an hour. Despite having engaged in physical labour from 8.00 in the morning, Const. was famous for being able to run from the top of the quarry in Doonagore, to the pub in Doolin where he would 'down' a pint and a 'grinder'[†], and be back in time to resume work an hour later. I estimate that distance to be about 2¼ miles which makes it a round trip of about 4½ miles or 7.5km.

Their sister Katie (Jackson) was a big woman to my young eyes. She was a vivacious and outgoing character. When she wanted to say something about someone she had a great command of both Irish and English. She would throw a look at her sister and might use the odd Irish word she thought I didn't understand – but of course, I spoke both Irish and English, so I didn't miss much. Katie was housekeeper for the Gardaí in Doolin and fed them well I believe. I remember a Guard Begley who was a Kerry man. There was another Guard named O'Brien and he married Mago Fitzgerald, who was a daughter of 'Paddy Carroll' (whose actual name was Paddy Fitzgerald – Carroll being a derivative of his Irish name MacGearailt) and Margie Cusack.

[†] A 'grinder' was a full uncut pan of bread.

Janey was a quiet, woman, she lived in the house with her brothers and I think she was so busy making everyone else comfortable, that she never said much, nor did she ever sit down. Big mugs of tea were handed out to all the adults present and some times big slices of home-made bread. She had married a man called Hayes who I know nothing about, and they had a son Connie Hayes who I knew very well (again the use of the hereditary name, showing the devotion to their family). Her other son Jimmy was the quietest man you ever met. My sister May who became a nun was a great friend of his as was my sister Annie. He eventually married a woman from Miltown and at one point, they started a Post Office up in Doonagore.

As an epilogue to the story of the Davorens, a number of years ago, I stood outside their house in Doonagore, having stopped and chatted to Johnny Salmon a few minutes earlier, when I met him by chance on the road. I hadn't seen him since 1948. When I saw that the door of the house was half open, I couldn't resist going inside. It was sad to see the place in ruin, but there was still a man's old coat hanging on the back of the door. I stood and thought - was it belonging to Const. or Pauric Cosnaí. I thought happy memories of those proud, welcoming old people who laughed, talked, told stories and entertained me all those years ago. They were extraordinary people.

Possible Site of 1830s Silver Mine



Silver Mine, 1842. © OSI Ireland
(Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth



Other Quarries & Mines

In addition to the production of the world-famous Liscannor Stone, other valuable minerals and metals have been extracted in the area. There is historical evidence of a failed Silver Mine in Doolin in the nineteenth century and the area had a highly successful Phosphate Mine and an exploratory Fluorspar Mine in the mid 20th century.

Silver Mine

The 1845 Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland, in an entry on Roadford mentions a 'quondam' or former silver mine, which we assume is the 'silver mine' on the 1842 map of the area. Cronin (2001) identifies a location for this in his mapping of the geological resources in the area - to the north of Fisherstreet, not far from the site of Doolin House. Elsewhere (minedat.org, ND) this same site is recorded with the following comment:

Site of a trial silver mine ... that was unsuccessfully worked in the 1830s with little evidence of it remaining today'.

Phosphate[‡] Extraction

The main mining and quarrying that people remember is the phosphate extraction in the Doolin and Noughaval areas. The initial

‡ While the locals in Doolin always called this phosphate, a number of Geological Survey of Ireland reports refer to phosphorite - 'to cover any variety of richly phosphatic sedimentary rock'.

Workers Removing 8' of 'Overburden' from Riverbed Near Crusher - 1941

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discovery was made in 1924 by the enigmatic Judge Michael Comyn (usually referred to locally as Judge Cummins), an amateur geologist who began experimental extraction of 'Phosphorite'. By January 1925 he had quarried about 100 tons in Noughaval. In subsequent years, exploration

by the Geological Survey examined the extent of the 'phosphatic zone', and identified a more economically valuable deposit in Toomullin townland. Tests were done on the Doolin samples in 1934 and then Judge Comyn began to develop commercial quarries at Doolin and Noughaval (McCluskey, 1951).

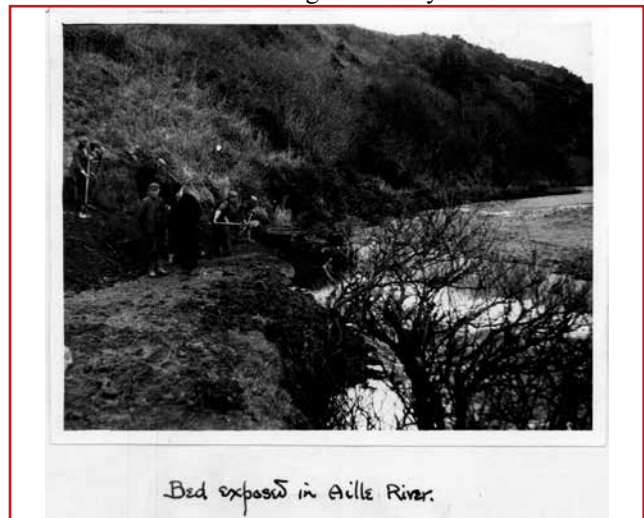
General View of Quarry 1942

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1941 Exposed Riverbed

Reproduced with permission from Geological Survey Ireland © Geological Survey Ireland



Clare Phosphate Ltd Office and Works Toomullin

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Born in Ballyvaughan in 1871, Comyn worked as an excise officer in England for some time, before coming back to Ireland where he studied and then practiced law, became a Senior Council, a Government Senator and later a Judge. Comyn and his brother were highly influential in the early years of the Irish state and in his nephew's obituary in the Irish Times it is suggested that the Judge was 'passed over' for the position of Attorney General

for the Free State, since he had earlier fallen out with Éamon deValera. The aforementioned nephew was sent to school in England after his father and uncle 'fell out' with deValera, and he (the nephew) later became a highly respected judge in England. On retirement, this Sir James Comyn wrote a number of humorous memoirs, poetry, and books detailing interesting law trials.

Doolin Shaft Headframe Ready for Erection

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Doolin Shaft July 1945

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Up to the outbreak of war, only limited volumes of Judge Comyn's produce was needed by Irish fertiliser companies, but when the German U-boat blockades of the Second World War made it difficult to import farm fertilisers from Africa or South America, the government of the day stepped in to increase extraction of native Phosphate. Comyn's operation in Doolin was mainly open-cast quarrying on the bed of the Allie River, where the workers altered the flow of the river to allow

mineral extraction, building earthen dams to divert the water. In 1941 the state-sponsored Minerals Development Company, later known as Minraí Teoranta began 'adit-mining' on the main Doolin deposit, and large-scale quarrying in Noughaval. During this time, Comyn also continued his quarrying operations in both locations. The Clare phosphates played an important role in increased tillage production during 'The Emergency', however, supply was insufficient to keep up with demand.

Main Adit Doolin Mine 1942

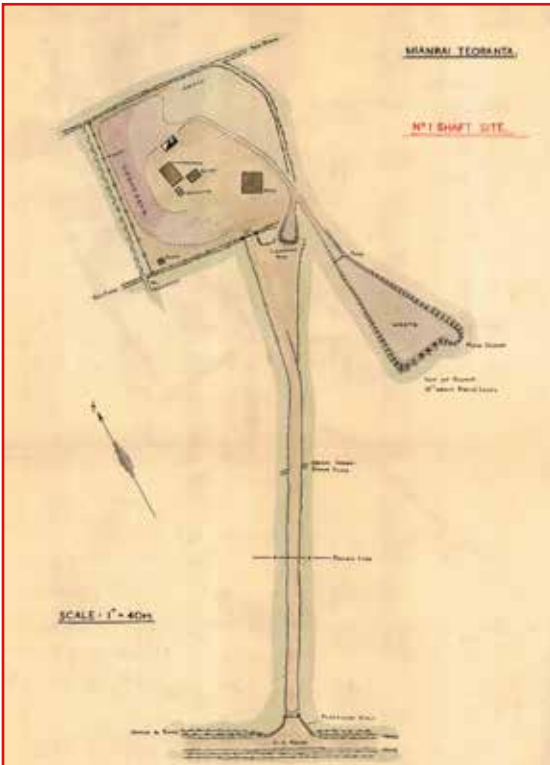
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According to Garrihy (2010), by 1939 Judge Comyn was employing 50-60 people in Toomullin, near Doolin. Relationships between the Judge and the government throughout this time were not good. Terms such as 'compulsory purchase' of his mining rights are used in relation to the arrival of Minraí Teoranta, with the subsequent dividend to the Judge from their operations not forthcoming. In what is claimed to be one of the longest law cases heard in the State, The Judge was eventually awarded £50,000 in compensation for 'lost earnings'. However, it appears that nothing was ever paid, with the State retaining the money as Income Tax arrears.

No 1 Shaft Site

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The government-owned Mianraí Teoranta, expanded production considerably beyond what Comyn had undertaken. In particular, their movement of production from open-cast to underground, yielded results. Cronin (2001) suggests that it was one of the largest mining undertakings in the state with up to 700 men working on the open cast and tunnel mines at the peak of production. This industry gave a much-needed boost to the economy of the Doolin area, and for a short time, there was no emigration, since work was plentiful, if very difficult.

The boom was short-lived and as early as 12th January 1946, the Clare Champion newspaper was publishing reports of workers being 'disemployed'. Clare County Council protested on a weekly basis about the loss of up to 600 jobs and the loss of about £2,000 per week in wages. The government of the day would not answer the local authority regarding the continuation of the

mine, but when asked, the mining engineer noted that 'the foreign stuff [i.e. phosphate from North Africa] was 10 percent better than the Doolin stuff'. Further news reports detail the political pleading undertaken to keep the mines open, claiming that the government of the time was subsidising many other industries. However, despite protestations from many politicians and leaders in North Clare, the processing of the hard phosphate was £3 more expensive per ton than cheaper imports which became available again once 'The Emergency' was over. The mines continued to wind down and were fully closed by Christmas 1947.

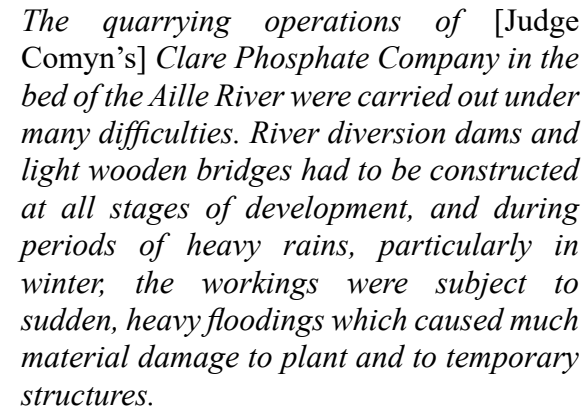
The following information on both operations in Doolin are extracted from a highly detailed 106-page memoir / report carried out in 1951 on *The Phosphorites of Co. Clare*, by J.A.G. McCluskey, for the Department of Industry and Commerce and the Geological Survey (1951:53-54). The author, McCluskey, was involved in the early exploration of deposits in 1930, and later supervised the sinking of bore holes between 1944 and 1946.

Doolin Phosphate Mine March 1942

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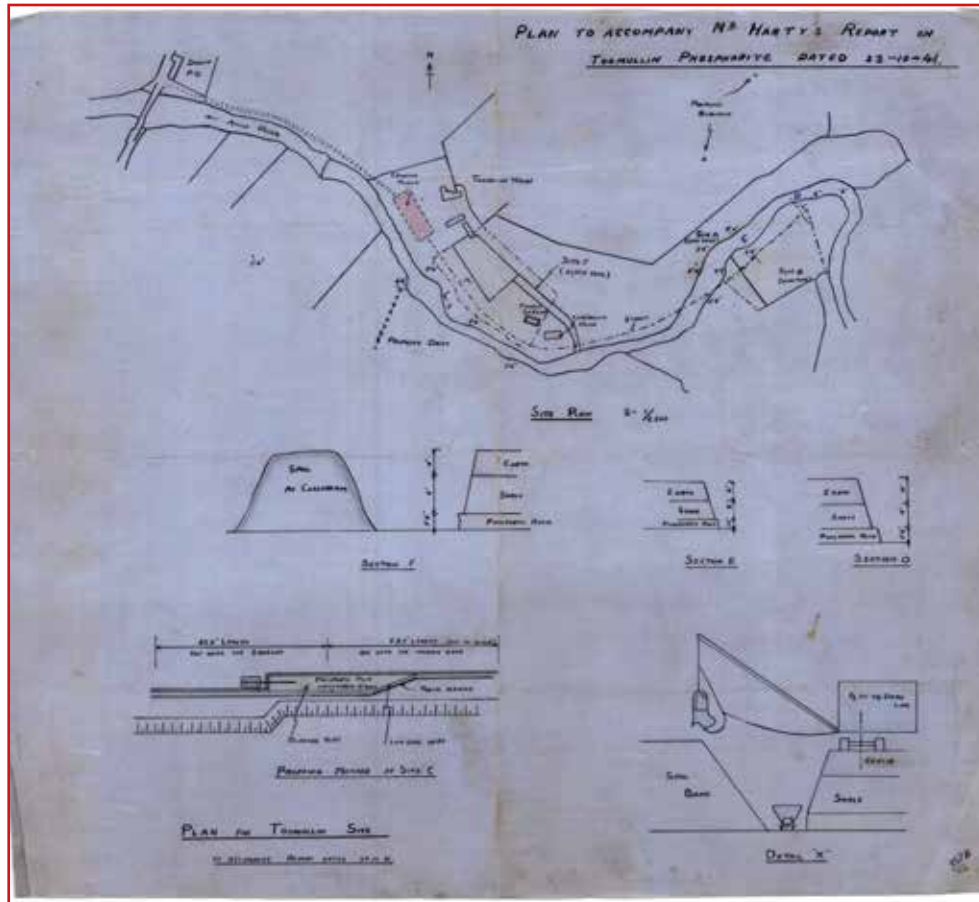
road-metal size. Owing to the coal and oil shortages of the Emergency period, power for crushing was provided by turf-fired steam- engines. The crushed material was transported by motor-lorry to Ennistimon.

Nearby, underground production in the state-sponsored mine was carried out:

The main adit [shaft] of Mianraí Teoranta's mine was commenced in 1941 at the point

Plan of Toomullin Phosphate 23-10-1941

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on the southern bank of the Aille River where the more westerly phosphorite lens displayed an outcrop thickness of 4 feet 6 inches, and the adit was driven southwards under the steep southern river bank ... Mining was carried out on the longwall system. The levels and crosscuts were 6 feet in height and the stope drives 5 feet. Timbering was used owing to the weakness of the shale roof. The levels were timbered with posts and caps. ...

The report of the State mine continues on, mentioning the hardness of the mineral, the blasting and drilling and transport of the crushed product to Ennistymon station by 'motor lorry',

... from whence it was despatched by rail to the fertiliser works. Power for most purposes at the [State] mine was provided by E.S.B. current.

Output from combined Doolin and Noughaval Quarries & Mines 1939-1947			
Year Ending	Clare Phosphate Company (Judge Comyn)	(Mianrai Teoranta)	
	Doolin and Noughaval Quarries	Doolin Mine	Noughaval Quarries
Aug/Sept 1939	1,175	-	-
Aug/Sept 1940	1,242	-	-
Aug/Sept 1941	9,708	-	-
Aug/Sept 1942	8,088	-	2,733
Aug/Sept 1943	4,430	3,400	8,265
Aug/Sept 1944	4,395	4,865	8,209
Aug/Sept 1945	4,082	11,459	6,955
Aug/Sept 1946	1,535	10,733	2,697
Aug/Sept 1947	-	9,489	-
Totals	34655	39946	28859
Source : derived from data in McCluskey, 1951			

An average weekly output of nearly 300 tons was reached in 1945. The total production in five years of working was 40,000 tons. The mine was closed down in 1947.

The statistics above are extracted from the report by McCluskey (1951) and illustrate the high volumes produced by the government in a short period of time.

Fluorspar Mine

All that is left from the experimental extraction of Doolin Fluorspar is a 'capped' mineshaft in the middle of a field, not far from the 'silver mine' mentioned above. Mianraí Teoranta undertook exploratory mining at this site, in 1943, and eventually, some extraction occurred between August and October 1947 (Cronin, 2001). Apparently, the Doolin exploration yielded 31 tonnes of fluorite that was used as a flux in the manufacture of steel (McNamara & Hennessy, 2010).

Mass of Purple Stepped Cubic Doolin Fluorite
(Collected by Sir Arthur Russell in June 1943. Barry Flannery photograph. Used with Permission from the James Mitchell Museum, National University of Ireland, Galway - <https://www.mindat.org/gl/216083>)



Memories of the Mines

As a child, I saw very little of the mines. I remember seeing where the men used to go in and it terrified me. I went down to the site once, and only once. My brother Andy was working there. He was no more than 18 or 19, I think. I remember having to go down with his lunch to him. There was this big long shed, and I wasn't let inside the door. Andy came out to me for the lunch. I found out afterwards that he had been a message runner, bringing the explosives from this shed, into the mines.

Dinny Moloney Remembers

On 12 October 1998, I spent an interesting few hours with my brother-in-law Paddy O'Connor and Dinny Moloney (both now R.I.P.) of Carnane, who had worked in the mines. Luckily, I made extensive notes and recorded some of the session. Dinny's description of the work that went on there is graphic in places, but presents a detailed description of the mines.

The Judge's mine was there first. It's in the lane by Considines. It started in 1941 I'd say - It was overhead, that mine was - an open-cast mine. All the mining done in the Judge's mine was overground. They took the

Capped Shaft of Doolin Fluorspar Mine, 2020



bed of the river all the way from the cascade that was down here above Considines till they went right over to the back of Phaidins. The land wasn't so high there. Joe Doherty's house was there and they took the kitchen garden away. They let the river down at that side while they were taking the phosphate off the river bed up along at the other side. They worked cleverly. Then when they had taken that they put the river back again and took all the kitchen garden and everything right up there. There was about eight or ten feet I suppose, of phosphate.

There'd be a man on the ground at the bottom firing it up a certain distance and the man that would be above at this platform - he'd have to take it and shove it well back - That was the order. And the old Judge and Guthrie would be sitting there on the embankment - Guthrie was the boss - that would be Andy Guthrie and John Guthrie's father - they worked hard in it.

Guthrie was a close friend of the Judge ... he married Bill Guthrie's sister - Kathleen. That's how he came to the Spa. There he was, and he educated his family there and they went here and there. He was the foreman and he built a house beyond the Spa - St. Patrick's it was called - the finest house you ever saw. They were there for a while, and then knocked it all to the ground again. It was an L shaped kind of house. Andy Cummins from Ballyvaughan drove one of the lorries. Himself and a lot of the other workers stayed in Guthrie's house - as boarders. The money was small then.

There was a strike there in the mine once and they all came down - Barber, Stike and all them - they came down and sat on the bridge. Anthony Sheainin Phaid Rua - he was the organiser of it. ... They walked up and down the road. They said they'd stay out for a week or a fortnight. He [the Judge] said 'Twould pay me too to leave them there for a week or a fortnight or a month ... if I don't have to give them any rise' - The

Judge was clever. They were anxious to go back to make a few shillings as they hadn't any money. So, they had to go back.

The wages were very small in the Judge's mine but they were £2-8 shillings to £2-11 shillings (per week) in the government underground mine.

Mrs Moloney joined the conversation and noted the following:

Dinny worked for £2-8 shillings in the other mine and he went on the jack-hammer for £2-11 shillings ... I still have the dockets. Then there was a rise up to three pounds ... and over three pounds - after another while.

Dinny continued:

The English bosses were great. [Particularly] if you did extra in the tunnel - went further ... There would be a measurement every Friday, and those guys that used to be working ... you know ... there was rivalry between them. Campbell had his group - Player Tom Owen and them crowd and they'd be inclined to make more measurement than the other crowd - Danny Ward ... [would be] under pressure ... I saw Danny once - the shale wasn't ... cleared off the bed - I had it bored - the rock - and he got a charge and blew it - in order to put that much extra in to cope with the other guys that were going ahead. Oh, they'd keep you moving.

But I'll tell you about those Englishmen: they were gentlemen; no doubt about it. there was Nelson there ... he was head man there.

Underground Engineering

Dinny then described to us, how two groups of miners coming from opposite directions would meet, joining up two mine shafts: In the following account, the two groups had almost reached each other:

They were going to the north of our side. We were coming at the right-hand side of them

from Williams's - coming this way towards the river and they were going the other side. And we had almost passed each other out and we heard the noise ... the tapping. And believe it or not, I was the man that bored between them [the converging shafts]. I bored a hole across the two and we could speak to the ones that were at the other side. But anyhow, it was very ugly. The boss came there and he looked through it; And do you know what he said to me? It would remind you of a greyhound's hind leg he said. When they took the balance that was between the two (shafts) we had gone so much to the right and they had gone so much to the left, it had a width ... instead of 6 ft. it was the width of the house. You'd have to build a big back to straighten up with the way it should have been from both sides and it looked terrible bad engineering- that's what he meant - that it was terrible bad engineering. Tighe and Barry Ward were the guys that would plan that, and whatever way they ran it, they were passing each other out. T'was bad engineering. You had double the width and it looked very ugly. It was very dangerous too. You could see the lines - the seams in it, and you'd wonder what was holding it up.

Accidents and Injuries

It was difficult and dangerous work:

You know where the shaft went down - where Jim Burns (from Dublin) got killed - that was just below Clarke's. We were working there ... Kiloury ... Tommy Cuckoo ... Danny Lahiff ... Danny Malone [on day shifts and night shifts]. there were 14 ladders [down the shaft]. John Flanagan would be pumping the water from half way up ... maybe 30 or 40 ft. up ... the sump would be filling with water all the time.

Mick Rynne and Danny Leary were going to go down - Jack Garrahe was there - he was on the winch - he was the man that was releasing the rope. Burns [was going down] when he got killed. They went into

the barrel - two of them went in. It was a steel barrel with a handle and a hook - that was [attached] on to the rope that would go up over the pulley above, and the bucket goes down into the well - 170 feet. So down it goes, and when it was $\frac{1}{2}$ ways, or $\frac{3}{4}$ ways down, Garrahe went to put the brake on to stop it - but he couldn't. It began chipping the cogs and it went out of control, struck the bottom, and hopped up - I suppose about 15ft. and he [Burns] was [standing] one leg inside and one leg outside it and it split him in two halves ... Over the top the rope went, off the drum, and the whole rope went down into the bottom of the shaft and there was nothing to bring them up or to [get people] down ... there was 14 ladders up to the top, and the first ladder from the bottom might be up about 15 or 20 feet. There wasn't a hope. Then the trouble was to bring the rope back up and put it back on the drum again.

Another time, Connie Hayes ended up in hospital, and when he came out he had a dark mark on the side of his face. Well, I'll tell you what happened. It was on a Saturday evening, and this foreman came there ... in the evening, and Connie Hayes was there, and Patrick Connell. So, there was a plate primed off [i.e. ready to explode] only to set it alight you know, and it was in a part of the mine where the [tunnel] was only about the height of that table there [pointing to kitchen table]. And the detonator was quite close and those that had to light it hadn't that distance to go. So, Hayes was outside, and he said 'come on, come on, - 'tis apt to blow any minute' And your man [the foreman] was so bold, he didn't want to give to say that he was frightened. But Connell was above in the middle of the set of rock, and there was 8 holes - 8 charges down, and when Hayes saw the danger he was shouting, shouting to come on. The next thing was, the first charge went off ... and Connell was down off the roof - down on top of McGinley - he was there and the stones all around him, and McGinley - that was the

guy - he was farther out, and it blew the leg from the hip off him. I suppose he went to go, and it knocked him and blew the leg off him. And Hayes got the full blast of the dust off it on the face; And Connell - all his gums and his teeth were blown out ... Hayes never got cleaned up ever after. I remember getting a cut in the middle of my hand, and for years, that black was inside, - you could never get rid of that black spot that that rock would put on you. Or if you cut your finger, and it cured and cured and cured, but you could see the blue inside the skin always ... Pat Connell took the full blast of them 8 shots, and he sitting above on top of the rock. Pat Connell from Doonagore ... he survived that, and got married afterwards and had a family - He lived in Dublin after. He was Coola Connell's son from Doonagore.

We had good times ... but that time we suffered agony ... We had to sink the shaft after Burns getting killed in it ... about 10 or 12 ft. deeper you know, for a sump. We were down so many feet, but not deep enough and I was on the evening shift and Tommy Kiloury and 7 or 8 more of us. And we had to take up all the rock that would be blown ... there'd be no more blown after the foremen would go away.

Danny Malone was the oldest then and the gang he had with him weren't great workers either - but Kiloury was like a savage-he'd want to do as much work as six men.

There was a bit of a tunnel to be started at the other side of the shaft, And the only way you could go was a plank was laid on the floor of the tunnel that was going up There'd be 2 ropes hanging down off the timbers and there would be two planks put through the ropes, and out on them we'd have to stand. When you'd have 80 or 90 lbs. pressure on a hammer and you'd put it in against the face, 'twould shake you all over.

You'd have to take off all your clothes bar your trousers going down - and the water that would be dripping down out of that when the bucket would come...!!! The bucket would be down in 1 or 2 ft. of water, and we had no place to go but stand on the planks with the freezing water dropping down on us

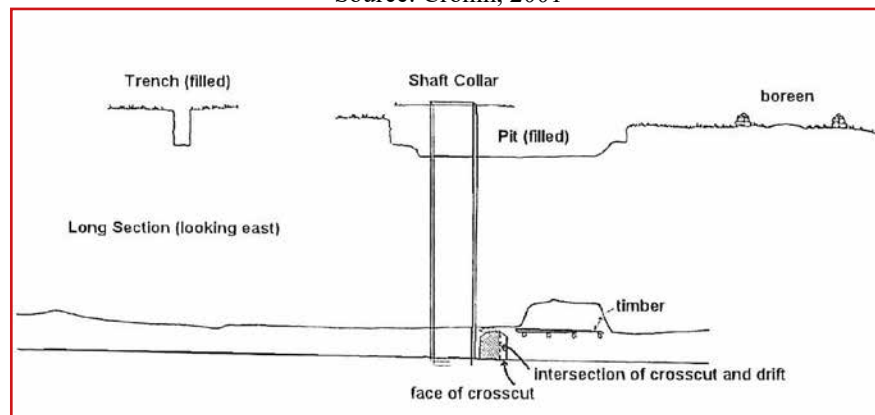
Poll Crámhin Fluorspar Mine

There was other mining at Poll Craimhin: I'll tell you about that. It was showing some signs of fluespar [fluorspar] and you know, it was inside like between seams of limestone and this white calcite when you'd often see through stones that would be on the road - it was showing a lot up there near Poll Craimhin. They started and they sunk a tunnel there - not very deep - 20 or 30 feet, and went along eastward, and the face of it was about 6 ft. or a little bit more.

When the main mine was closing, Danny Moy said to me: I'll get you a job. They're

Cross-section of Doolin Fluorspar Mine

Source: Cronin, 2001



The Mines in Doolin, Photo Taken in 1942



Front Row: Player Flaherty, Gus Murray, Paddy Linnane, Jackie Fitzpatrick, Willie Driscoll, Michael Moloney, Austin Davenport, Corcas, John Lynch

Middle Row: Mattie Doherty, James Woods, Paul Davis, Frank??, Kaiser Guerin, Pakie Kelly, Landon, Tommy Killourhy, Mattie Sean Ryan, Barber .. Donohoe - Stike?, Gussie O'Connor

Back Row: Miko Russell, Peter Maloney, Pop Donohoe, Mick O'Connor, Jacko Shannon, Gussie Linnane, Michael O'Loughlin, Dano Scales, Michael Egan, ... Shannon, Thomas Williams

closing here and you'll have a permanent job, and you'll be No. 1 for boring and all that, and you'll be paid well for it. I did it anyway - boring into the rock, and there was a mighty spring well in it - O!, pure spring water - and you couldn't keep it teemed. There had to be one teeming it all the time. But it [The mining project] went a bit anyway, and it never proved to be a success. - it wasn't worth it.

I don't know if it was 12 or 16 holes I put into the face of it ... that never blew, only blew back the hole but never blew the rock.

It was a kind of stuff that would temper steel; that's what it was. It would temper steel ... this fluorspar would, that's the purpose it was for. It was very rare. It was a kind of pucey colour - white & puce and you'd think there'd be streaks of like glass in it. But they thought that they would run

into a part where there would be a face of it - a real seam of it altogether, but they didn't.

They had been working there before the mines finished - before the government closed the mines ... There were a few lads up there working it. T'was the government working it all the time. But we had a nice time there, and it was a nice place to work in. They were nice people. We'd boil the kettle and send over to Mrs Daly for duck eggs - Philip was there - he'd make spoons out of 6-inch nails with a steel hammer ... to use to eat the eggs ...

Lismurrahaun Gold?

I clearly remember meeting the Judge once.

In addition to the phosphate mines, the Judge was involved in other ventures. For example, he organised the production of lime up in Lismurrahaun, on the eastern slopes of Slieve Elva, just behind where my mother came from. At that time the place was farmed by my uncles: Willie Fitzgerald (Michael's father) and his brother Paddy - my Mother's brothers.

In behind the house there was a lime kiln. The Judge had two men working there all the time. Tommy Gardner a small little man with a hat and Micho Burns a tall man with a cap. They sat all day long breaking stones to be thrown into the limekiln. They'd put a layer of turf, then a layer of broken stones, more turf, more stones, on and on until they got to the top. At the top there was like a funnel. You could go in underneath where they'd start the fire. Once lit, I think it used burn for days. You'd hear the rocks cracking and breaking with smoke going up all the time. When all the broken rocks were shattered and cracked down, it would be carted away in lorries.

I was very young at the time; no more than 5 or 6 years of age and I had been given a little hammer as a child's present. I'd wander off down to where the two men were working and I'd break off little bits of rock. But then I discovered an extraordinary thing in the limestone. I found a metal that looked just like little flicks of gold through the limestone of the place. I was fascinated by it.

I continued to pick up stones with flecks in them, and chip off the gold, but I had nothing to put it into. I picked up an empty cartridge shell (my Uncle Willy was a great man with the gun and loved hunting). I filled it with my nuggets of gold. My uncles didn't know what it was and when I asked Micho and Tommy they didn't know any

more than I did. They weren't sure if it was gold or not. They said the only thing to do was to ask the Judge. The Judge arrived in one of his trucks soon after that, no doubt to check their work or to collect a load. They mentioned about me and my gold.

The Judge drove up to the house and stopped in the middle of the yard at the back. He got out of the lorry and I was called over. What I remember was a man with a long black coat and a black hat. The Judge, whether he knew about my 'gold' or not, looked at the pieces seriously. He examined a few of them and told me he'd have to go and get them assessed.

He came back a week or so later and had an envelope with my 'nuggets' in it. 'I'm afraid the gold isn't real gold' he said, 'so it wouldn't be of any value', and he gave it back to me. I think my uncles were as disappointed as I was.

Mrs. Carey, Lúch 1930
© The Irish Folklore Commission



Education

Early Schools

It isn't possible to know when formal education began in Killilagh, but in early Christian Ireland, among the most famous monastic schools was that of Saint Enda of Aran, a short distance across the water from Doolin Pier. Other famous schools were: Glendalough (St. Kevin); Clonmacnoise (St. Ciaran), Holy Island, Lough Derg (St. Caimin); Kells and Clonard (St. Finnian). Nearer home, churches were established by local saints who may not have achieved the fame of the above mentioned, but nonetheless were highly important. These were; Kilmoon, Killeaney, Kilshanny, Killaspuglonane, Kilmacduagh (St. Coleman).

Killilagh is thought to have been established by a St. Foila, who gave her name to the church and parish. This however is very uncertain as there are no records referring to this saint, and perhaps the church got its name from the nearby cliffs - Cill Aighleach - the church by the cliffs. There were other old churches in Oughdarra, and Toomullin. It is worth noting here the Augustinian monastery of Kilshanny which had a great influence on the whole area as the name Augustine in its many forms (Austin, Augustin, Aughty, Gussie, etc) was extremely popular in Killilagh.

The Brehon Law Schools

Despite the changes brought about by the coming of Christianity, the pre-Christian Brehon laws were still in use throughout Ireland perhaps until the 1600s. The extent to which the monastic schools influenced the teaching of the Brehon laws is unclear, but many monastic establishments had recognised law schools. In *Triads of Ireland* (9th

Century), there is reference to the monasteries of Cloyne, Cork and Slane as legal centres. According to Kelly (1988), the written law texts which date from the seventh to the eighth centuries were written in Old Irish. The most important collection of these law-texts is known as 'Seanchas Mor' - 'Great Tradition'. Curiously, as noted in the *Annals of Ulster*, judges or lawyers in pre-Norman Ireland usually held ecclesiastical office. After the arrival of the Normans (1169) clerical involvement in Irish law diminished and law became mainly the preserve of laymen from a small number of legal families. Among these were the MacClancys of Killilagh and the O'Davorens of Cahermacnachtain in the Burren. Campion in his history of Ireland (from around 1571) visited a law school and describes what life was like there:

Without either precepts or observation of congruity they speake Latine like a vulgar language, learned in their common Schooles of Leach-craft [medicine] and Law, whereat they begin Children, and hold on sixteene or twentie yeares conning by roate the Aphorismes of Hypocrates, and the Civill Institutions, and a few other parings of those two faculties. I have seene them where they kept Schoole, ten in some one Chamber, groveling upon couches of straw, their Bookes at their noses, themselves lying flatte prostate, and so to chaunte out their lessons by peece-meale, being the most part lustie fellowes of twenty five yeares and upwards.

Despite all the efforts of the English to banish Irish customs, dress and laws, these law schools held on until at least 1603 AD. They were used, not only by the Irish but also by many Anglo-Norman lords. A point of interest in Campion's account is the fact that children began learning very young

and continued for twenty years and upwards - a long apprenticeship!

The MacClancys of Knockfinn ran one of the most famous law schools in Ireland. The *Annals of the Four Masters* record the death of Muirchertach MacFhlanchadha, ‘designate legal expert of Thomond’ in 1482. Among their clients were the O’Briens of Thomond, the Butlers of Ormond, the Powers of Waterford and the Fitzgeralds of Desmond. We also know that there was contact between the MacClancys and the other great law school of the O’Davorens of Cahermacneachtain in the Burren and the MacEgans of Ormond and Park in County Galway, who acted for many of the old Gaelic ruling families.

The MacClancys did not confine themselves to law, and their importance and learning are well noted. In the *Annals of the Four Masters**, in 1483 we read:

Conor Oge Mac Clancy, Ollav of Thomond, a man accomplished in literature and poetry, died.

The same Annals record the following in 1575:

Hugh, son of Boethius Mac Clancy, Professor of the Feineachas and of poetry, and a purchaser of wine, by no means the least distinguished of the lay Brehons of Ireland, died.

In 1576, the death of Baothgalach Og MacFhlanchadha is recorded:

1576 Boethius Oge, the son of Boethius, son of Murtough Mac Clancy, Ollav of Dal-Cais in judicature, and a man who kept a house of general hospitality, died.

While the O’Davoren law school of Cahermacneachtain in the Burren is outside our geographical territory, it should be noted

briefly that one of the most important early legal manuscripts, now known as *Egerton 88*, was compiled by Domhnall O’Davoren and his pupils between 1564 and 1569. The O’Davoren school existed at the same time as the MacClancys’ Knockfinn school and there was communication between the two. We get some further insights into life in the law schools from marginal comments in *Egerton 88* where pupils complained - usually in a light-hearted way - one complained that Donal O’Davoren made him do such an amount of work that the week seemed to have two Thursdays; another complained about the quality of pens, ink and vellum; there is reference to the cold, fatigue and lack of food; a scribe named Aedh laments that Domhnall is out harvesting while he is slaving away for him in the law school.

The MacClancy’s Law School of Knockfinn

We have no account in history or tradition, of the MacClancy law school in pre-Norman times. It seems to have been a lay school, and practised both Brehon and English law. Referring to the Glasha group of forts, (which contains Cahermacclancy fort) Westropp states:

The place does not figure in early history, Glaise and ‘the immunities of the MacFhlanchada’ or Clanchies, being first named in the 1390 rental. The MacClanchies were hereditary brehons of Thomond, and often appear in local history under the O’Briens and even under English influence. So famed for their legal knowledge was this clan, that the Earl of Desmond employed one O’Clancey called Brehuff an Erle (the Earl’s judge) in 1586 (Westropp: 125)

In 1585 the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir John Perrot, wrote to Sir Richard Bingham, governor of Connaught and Clare, proposed to bring Clare under English rule - all Irish titles were to be abolished and the inhabitants were to grant to the

* The full text of these annals is available online at: <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100005E/index.html>

Queen ten shillings a year for ‘every quarter of land containing 120 acres that bears either horn or corn’. There were some interesting exceptions to this levy, one being Boetius Clancy who was singled out for special praise and exempt from taxes: ‘the property of Boetius Clancy in consideration of his birth, learning and good bringing up’. Frost suggests that Boetius Clancy had been bribed into conformity by Perrot. The fact that he was treated so exceptionally shows how important he was. He and Turlogh O’Brien were to hold ‘their respective castles and lands ... free from crown rents and from all demands from the Earl of Thomond.’

By 1641 the *Book of Forfeitures and Distributions* shows how powerful the MacClancy family was. They owned practically all of Killilagh parish and parts of the Burren also. Having tried their best to be on the winning side of the Cromwellian wars, changing sides a number of times according to

Frost, by the time of the Cromwellian Plantations in the 1650s they had failed and lost everything. By 1669 a report states of one of the Clancys: ‘Instead of constructing a stone house as agreed upon, he built one of mud, stone not being convenient’ (Frost, 1893: Chapter 30) - a far cry from the castles of Knockfinn and Toomullin. There are later references to a Thomas Clancy of Killilagh parish in a 1689 Army list of King James, but eventually, the family ended their days in obscurity, with all their lands in Killilagh confiscated and no trace left of their castles of Knockfinn or Toomullin.

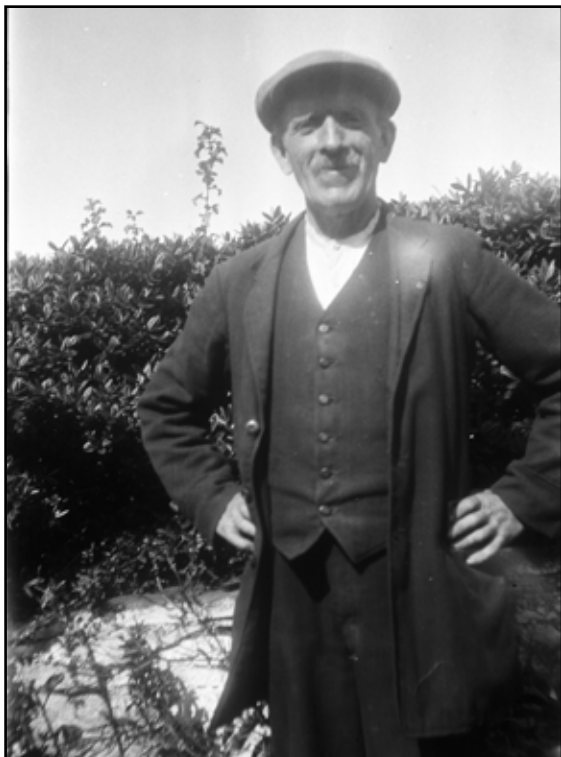
The Hedge Schools of Killilagh

The fifty years leading up to the Treaty of Limerick (1641-1691) were extremely turbulent in Ireland. Wars and confiscations resulted in the banishment of the Irish landowners leaving the people without leaders, and the bards and poets without patrons. There was nothing left to stand between the people and their total Anglicisation. The dark days of the penal laws had arrived. These edicts were mainly against education, religion and property, and it is the laws against education which concern us here. The Penal Laws forbade Catholics to teach in schools or to send their children abroad to be educated. Even to harbour a teacher was a crime. Though these laws were passed, it was impossible to fully enforce them throughout the country. Towards the end of the 1700’s the Penal Laws began to relent, and as a result ‘hedge schools’ began to spring up throughout Ireland.

Stiofáin Uí Ealaoire described the hedge schools of Killilagh to Professor Séamus O Duilearga (*Leabhar Stiofáin Uí Ealaoire* p.310 – my own rough translation):

In the old days there were no schools like today’s, but schoolmasters, down in their luck, travelling the roads. In places where proper schools were too far away, the local

Seán Mac Mathúna 1930
© The Irish Folklore Commission



people set up a little shed and it was there that school was held throughout the year; and those near enough attended school there. Often the teacher's dwelling was not very good, but that was all he had. His custom was to go from house to house - a night in the home of each scholar here and there. These schoolteachers were men deprived of their livelihood with no other occupation but to wander the roads.

There was a school in Luogh – at a place called ‘Luogh Park’ and another at ‘Binn a’ Luig. There was a school down in Ballycotton and in many such places where there were children with no other school near them.

Referring to the schools in the parish of Lisdoonvarna, Larkin and McGrath comment:

a number of travelling teachers held school in different parts of the parish. They got lodgings in the homes of the pupils in turn, and in addition, each child attending school paid 1/6 a quarter. Irish was not taught nor allowed to be spoken in any of these schools.

The classes of these travelling teachers took place in the houses of the children or in any shed or hovel available - often outdoors in the shade of a hedge or ditch when weather permitted. Hence the schools became known as ‘Hedge Schools’. The education provided in these ‘establishments’ was very uncertain as teachers moved on, though some settled in an area, particularly if they were native to the place. Sometimes, the school closed down for the winter months or when the children were needed to work on the farms. In 1824 an *Education Enquiry* found that Killilagh had three hedge schools, all the pupils and the three teachers of these hedge schools being Roman Catholic.

1824 Hedge Schools in Killilagh			
Townland	Ballyvo	Knockflur	Ballymackin
Teacher	Jas. Fitzpatrick	Oliver Davoran	Henry Crean
Total annual income	1/3 - 2/6 per pupil Per Quarter	16/	8/
Description of school	Wretched thatched shed	The Parish chapel	A wretched hovel of the worst description
Male Pupils	32	103	33
Female Pupils	12	8	14
Total	40	120	47

Ballyvo is probably Ballyvoe and Knockflur would appear to be Knockfinn as the reference to the Parish Chapel denotes. Ballymackin is more obscure – I would guess it is possibly Ballinalacken? While the totals of boys and girls do not add up satisfactorily, they give a fair indication as to the numbers catered for. There are Protestant returns for the same three schools which pitch the numbers somewhat lower than the Catholic returns given above, though the differences are only slight.

In the Enquiry no Protestant or other schools were mentioned. This is unusual considering the following, written by Larkin and McGrath in 1944:

A small Protestant school was built in Carnane during the period 1770-1800. It was probably used also as a Protestant church for some time, as the Scales families who were then Protestants had taken residence in that village about that period. The building is still standing and is now used as a cow shed. This seems to be the only Protestant school ever existing in this parish.

Perhaps the ‘protestant school’ had closed by the time of the 1824 *Education Enquiry*. Shortly afterwards, Lewis, in his 1837 description of

Killilagh states: 'There are one public and three private schools'. He also notes that in Toovahera there is a small chapel 'in which a school of about 50 scholars is kept'. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland, 1845 states:

In 1834, the Protestants of the parish and union amounted to 62; the Roman Catholics of the parish and union to respectively 3,546 and 4,712. Two daily schools in the parish - one of which was salaried with £20 from the Baptist Society - had on their books 74 boys and 8 girls; and two other daily schools in the parish were shut during winter, and made no report of their attendance.

Possibly the school supported by the Baptist Society was the one in Carnane referred to by Larkin and McGrath, but curiously, the Education Enquiry of 1824 makes no reference to this.

This was the situation as an entirely new system of education was beginning in Ireland.

National Schools

In 1831 the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Stanley set up a system of National Education. This was run by a National Education Board, and opened up education 'to the poor of Ireland.' The entire arrangement was criticised by some who saw it as a ruse to Anglicise Ireland in language and religion, however, it was lauded by others who saw a chance to better the lot of Irish children.

Ballinalacken National School.

Ballinalacken National School was established before the one in Doolin. It was 'taken into connexion' (ratified) by the Board of Education on 13th June 1839, the Catholic applicant being Fr. Michael Kelly PP of Killilagh. The planned school was to have two rooms – 50ft by 20ft and the full cost to build and furnish the school was £296-9-5.

The final expenditure came to £277-10-0 of which the Board granted £150 towards the building and £23-6-8 towards furnishing. The local contribution amounted to £104-3-4. Payment was made on 27th March 1841, denoting that the building was ready about this date. The local landlord, John O'Brien stated that 'This school opened for business on Monday 22nd February 1841'. Whether teaching began on that date is unclear, as a report of 19th June 1841 stated that salary was granted to the teacher, Patrick Hayes from 1st April 1841. Records show payments were made to Mr Hayes as follows: April to September 1841 - £4; September '41 to April 1842 - £8; April to September 1842 - £6

At some stage after the school opened it was decided to have a separate girls' school, and on 19th June 1841 Ballynalacken[†] Female School was 'taken into connexion'. The first teacher in this school was Mary Hayes who was granted salary from 1st May 1841. The following was her salary over the next few years: Salary paid on 30th September 1841: £3-6-8 for five months; Salary paid on 31st March 1842: £5-6-8; Salary paid on 30th September 1842: £5; Salary paid on 31st March 1843: £5.

We can reasonably presume that Patrick Hayes was a comparatively young man, and it is not clear whether Mary Hayes, teacher in the girls' school was his wife or relative.

As stated, the Catholic applicant for the school was the Rev. Fr. Michael Kelly PP of Killilagh - with thirteen lay applicants. This number of applicants was unusual and may indicate an attempt to over-compensate in a situation of local conflict, or a personality clash. It seems that Mr. O'Brien the landlord, was at pains to show that he was Manager of the school and corresponded with The Board from the very beginning. Even when the school

[†] The spelling of Ballinalacken varies from entry to entry, often being written as Ballynalacken.

was being built, he had alterations made to the planned roof, and on 9th January 1841 he notified the Board that he was the corresponding manager of the school. On 15th February 1843 it was noted that Mr. O'Brien had transferred the Managership of the school to Rev. M. Kelly, Ennistymon. By 9th August 1844 the problem (whatever it was) seems to have been resolved with the advent of a new parish priest, Fr. Patrick Fallon who replaced Fr. Michael Kelly. On that date Mr. O'Brien Esq. notified the Board regarding change of manager as 'Mr. Kelly has removed to another parish'.

Patrick Hayes continued in the school through the famine years until 1847. On 5th May of that year he died and notice of the fact was given to the Board two days later. The Inspector on 5th August 1847 reported that Michael Glynn had applied for the position of new teacher in Ballinalacken on the previous May 6th – the day after the death of Patrick Hayes.

Apparently, Michael Glynn's application was successful, as a report of 24th February 1849 shows him absent from school with a very incompetent substitute in his place. The Secretaries ordered that the Manager be called on to remove the substitute. We do not know if Michael Glynn returned to Ballinalacken, but there were a number of 'incompetent' replacements in position around this time. An inspector's report of 1851 notes the resignation of John Dowley on 6th August 1850, from which date the school was conducted by Patrick Grady. Grady acted as substitute until his appointment as teacher from 1st January 1851.

In those early years, teachers came and went frequently, and the next teacher to arrive was Patrick Davoren on 1st October 1851. A curious clarification was offered in the following January, that 'Pat Davoren is the same teacher who taught in this school as Michael Davoren'. Either way, this latest arrival seems to have been interested

and energetic, and his qualifications included both literary and agricultural subjects. He immediately began to set up agricultural subjects in somewhat the same lines as the 'Model Farm Schools' of the time. These establishments were an attempt to deal with problems of the famine and were initiated to ensure that people in rural Ireland were educated in the most up to date farming methods. They taught literary subjects also. The following queries from the Board of Education to Rev. Fr. Patrick Fallon PP, Manager of the school, and his answers to the queries, show an interesting picture of Ballinalacken school and its new teacher:

Ballinalacken National School. County of Clare, Barony of Corcomroe,	
Parish:	Killilagh, Cloghane, Doolin, Ennistymon
Name of Teacher:	Patrick Davoren
Teacher of literary school	Yes
The farm is on 7 statute acres Rent per Ac.= 5/-. Teacher himself is paying for it. The farm is in the immediate vicinity of the schoolhouse. Instruction is from 1 to 3 o'clock on Saturdays and from 4 to ½ 5 on other weekdays on the farm and in the school. Instruction also from half past twelve to one o'clock. 30 pupils at present but a large increase is expected. There are no farm buildings on the premises.	
Manager's signature:	Patrick Fallon PP 18th Nov. 1851

The Board's Agricultural Inspector visited Ballinalacken after this application (almost a year later) and the following is his report from 21st August 1852:

Ballinalacken National School	
Patron:	Patrick Fallon PP
Post town	Doolin, Ennistymon
Teacher	Patrick Davoren
Is he (teacher) competent to give instruction in agricultural theory and practice?	Yes
Does he lecture the pupils in the theory of agriculture in the schoolroom?	Yes –the times so occupied from 12.30 to 1 o'clock on the five days of the week.

Are the pupils instructed on the farm in the practice of agriculture each day?	They have assisted in such work as sowing of green-crops, thinning and weeding etc.
Extent of the farm?	Seven statute acres.
Describe the situation of the farm as regards the schoolhouse:	It is contiguous to the schoolhouse.
Are there farm offices?	Yes.
The quality of the land and how it is cropped?	Part reclaimed bog and part a tenacious clay soil.
Number of pupils receiving agricultural instruction daily?	Fifteen
Books used in giving agricultural instruction?	The Agricultural Class Book.
Has the teacher any and what stock on the farm?	None at present but he is about to purchase some.
Do you consider that a grant should be made; if so state the amount?	Yes. I consider that Mr. Davoren (the teacher) who has been trained in both the literary and the agricultural departments is likely by precept and example to diffuse correct views of agricultural management in his district, which is miserably poor.
Signed: Thomas Kirkpatrick Agricultural Inspector.	

The result of all this was that Patrick Davoren was granted salary for agricultural instruction from 1st June 1852 and so the school progressed until 8 March 1854, when a letter from the Right Rev. Dr. P. Fallon informed the Commissioners of his resignation from managership of this, Doolin and Rathbane (Lisdoonvarna) National Schools in favour of Rev. James Coffey, the new parish priest of Killilagh. This was because of his ordination as Bishop to the See of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora.

In the same letter, Dr. Fallon informed the Commissioners that at the request of Mr. O'Brien MP he was prepared to accept the Management of St. Bridget's National School and also Liscannor National School. There was a small problem here,

however, as St. Bridget's N.S. was in the estate of Cornelius O'Brien of Birchfield, who was a good friend of Dr. Fallon, but Liscannor was in the estate of Sir. Edward Fitzgerald. The problem was soon resolved, however, as Sir Edward Fitzgerald also wished that Dr. Fallon would manage Liscannor School. Dr. Fallon had settled in Liscannor parish on his appointment as Bishop.

On December 16th 1854 the Board was notified of the death of Fr. Coffey who had replaced Dr. Fallon, and that his successor, Fr. Thomas Kelly who succeeded him was desirous of being appointed Manager of this (Ballinalacken), Doolin and Rathbane National Schools.

Doolin National School

We know that Fr. Fallon was very much in favour of a school in Doolin as was the local landlord, Major Wm. Nugent Macnamara, however, it is curious that an application was not made until 1846. The usual method of application was by letter to the Commissioners, but interestingly, the Doolin application was 'made in person' in June 1846 by either Fr. Fallon or by Major Macnamara MP of Doolin House. The name of the initial applicant was not given though it was most likely Fr. Fallon as he was afterwards referred to as the applicant, with a postal address at Glasha, Ennistymon. From the very beginning, the school itself was called 'Doolin School' (sometimes spelled 'Doolan').

The delay in making the initial application was made up for by the speed with which the project was set in motion. This is also proof of the determination of these two men. Money and land for a site were no problem even in these hard times, and we can see the hand of Major Macnamara here. The timing was inauspicious however, as Ireland was in the throes of a terrible Famine, and this may explain the delay in the actual building of the school as we will see. On

Typical Schoolhouse (in Bunratty Folk Park)
(Photograph courtesy of Christine Johnson)



30th June 1846 official application forms were sent to Doolin and these were returned to the Commissioners by 11th July. A few weeks later, Mr. John Bradford, Superintendent of National Schools visited Doolin and sent back his report to Dublin, in which he stated:

These schools are to be built nearly in the centre of a district in this county N & E of the Cliffs of Moher of fully 25 square miles unprovided with a proper school of any sort. The population of the immediate vicinity is so dense that a male and female school would be well attended. The sight is good. I cannot see a cause for refusing a grant. Two rooms would be required.

John Bradford, Supt. of National Schools.

Application for aid in building a male and female school in Doolin dated 23 July 1846 was made by Rev. P. Fallon, Glasha, Ennistymon. The chosen site was at Doolin, Killilagh on the road from Moher to Blackhead. It measured 80ft. by 50ft. but 'more would be given if required'. It was 'a healthy situation', was to be enclosed by a wall and was not part of any church, chapel or meeting place as required by The Board. The nearest postal town was Ennistymon and the person making the 61-year lease was Major W.N. Macnamara MP, Doolin. This school was expected to serve $\frac{3}{4}$ of the parish and would cater for 150 male and 150 female pupils. With the above, the application also gave the following details:

Local subscription available?	Any amount required will be ready now
Any other schools in the area?	One - a bad hedge (school). No N.S. within 10 miles
Clergy consulted?	The P.P.; the applicant. The Rector is opposed to N.S.
Other individuals consulted?	Yes. They recommend this application in the warmest terms.

Following the visit of Mr. Bradford the school was 'Taken into Connexion' (sanctioned) by the Board on 20th August 1846. And 'Vested in the Commissioners' for 61 years. The specifications were that the building should have two rooms and two privies; each room to measure 34ft by 18ft for two hundred children. The Board would grant £134 towards building and £15 towards furnishing the new school. The local contribution expected was £101. So, the full cost of the project was £250.

The lease having been executed, word came on 29th December 1846 that the 'parties (were) directed to proceed with the building'.

After this swift processing of the preliminaries there seems to have been a slowing down, probably due to the raging famine, which in 1847 was at its worst. People were now concentrating on holding on to life rather than on building the school. But the work did go on, and by April 1848 must have been close to roof level as at this stage a problem arose regarding the 'flags' for roofing the school. The Manager was cautioned that 'flags' were not acceptable, and to qualify for the grant, a specified kind of slate must be used (this interjection must have puzzled the locals, but administrators in Dublin would not have been familiar with the local 'flags'). All conditions must have been met, as the grant was forwarded on March 28th 1849, a few days before the school opened its doors for the first time 'on the first Monday of April 1849' (April the 2nd that year).

The first Principal of the new school was Edward Finnegan, a trained teacher grade 2, who was aged 27. Finnegan had been appointed in the previous month having come from the National School of Bushy Park, Galway, where he had taught for ten years. He had furnished testimonials - one from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Galway, and another from his former Parish Priest, the Rev. Mr. Rush PP, Dominican Convent Galway. His salary was £18 (p.a.) beginning on April 1st. His wife, Mary Finnegan also took up her appointment as teacher (of the girls' school) with a salary of £9 (p.a.) The scholars also paid towards their education – a total of about £4 per annum between the two schools (Male & Female)

The average attendance in the beginning was 42 Males and 25 Females, but an increase in numbers was expected 'in addition to the present average'. These figures fell far short of the expected attendance but the famine had taken its toll.

The new school in Doolin was a fine solid structure with two large rooms, each measuring 34ft. by 18ft. This structure still dominated the windswept landscape of Doolin in my early life in Ballyvara. The upstairs room was reached by a stone-stairs on the outer wall of the southern gable. This room was divided in two - the inner room for the junior boys and the outer for the senior boys. To enter or leave the junior room one had to pass through the senior room where the master taught. Downstairs access to the girls' school was through the porch, and as upstairs, the room was divided by a partition separating the senior girls from the juniors. The outdoor 'privies' or toilets were about thirty paces from the main building and to the south. These were dry toilets as the school had no running water.

The early years in Doolin School were uncharted territory for all involved. There were many hiccups and difficulties as there was no former experience

Lisdoonvarna, 1842, © OSI Ireland (Permit No. MP 003720) & Russell Library Maynooth.
There is almost no evidence of a settlement in Lisdoonvarna in 1842.



on which to draw when dealing with the problems which arose. From the outset, The Board set a very high standard and demanded satisfactory results. The teachers were under pressure as their pupils were so new to a strict code of discipline. Parents' expectations could not always be met, so that this new venture was a learning experience for pupils, teachers and parents. As with most schools in the country, there is a full record in the *National Archives of Ireland*, of the many communications between the Commissioners for Education, the school Manager, the teachers, parents and children. Rather than giving a tedious day to day account of these interactions, we have chosen to outline a selection of events and incidents through the decades.

The first school manager was Fr. Fallon PP, who had an address at Glasha, Ennistymon. The rapid development of Lisdoonvarna had not yet begun, so the nearest postal town was Ennistymon, and the parish priest of Killilagh lived in Glasha, just a short distance up from the chapel at Knockfinn. He had come to the parish c.1844 and continued as Manager through the early years of the school. Later he was appointed Bishop of Kilfenora, being consecrated on May 1st 1853 in Gort.

The following year on March 8th a new school manager was appointed: Rev. James Coffey PP. His term was very short, and on December of the same year he was replaced by Rev. Thomas Kelly PP. A letter from the Right Rev. Dr. Patrick Fallon in November 15th 1858 notified the Commissioners that Fr. Mortimer Brennan P.P. of Lisdoonvarna had been appointed manager of Doolin School in succession to Fr. T. Kelly. This was the first mention of Lisdoonvarna as the residence of the Parish Priest, and points to 1854-1858 as the period when the Parish Priests moved residence from Killilagh. In 1859 Rev. Fr. E. Power was appointed manager of the school;

this was a long and fruitful stay. I have heard old men speaking of Fr. Power as late as the 1940's and his work in the parish was even then still remembered.

From the early days, Doolin school needed upkeep, repairs and alterations. Francis Donohoe repaired the school in October 1857. Dampness in the walls caused some problems but the Clark of Works stated that the dampness was caused by lack of firing and that the walls were sound. Periodically, the principal drew attention to the need for painting and whitewashing.

While we cannot suggest that the teachers were without fault, the terrible treatment of teachers by the Board of Education and its school inspectors is well acknowledged, with many unfounded accusations and criticisms being made. It is quite unusual for the records of the Board to say something positive. In June 1856, Thomas Davenport, member of the local Board, complained about the carelessness of teachers and the irregularity of their attendance. These charges were not upheld and the matter was dropped. In 1858, the teacher was

admonished for inattention to order and required to display more energy in the discharge of his several duties in future.

Again in 1859 the teacher was warned that

more care (should) be taken in keeping accounts.

The school inspector suggested alterations and additions to school furniture in May of 1859 and in September of that year Edward Finnegan was

severely reprimanded for low proficiency of pupils and for want of distinction in reading ...

Juno. Finnegan was appointed as 'Monitor' from June 1st 1859. The Monitor system was a process where a bright pupil who might take up teaching,

was given extra tuition by the principal. In turn they helped out in the school by doing some hours of teaching. Afterwards they might attend a training college to fully qualify as a teacher. Though the monitor's salary was only a few pounds per year, it helped both the monitor and the teacher. Many monitors were employed in Doolin with varying success over the years, Juno. Finnegan, son of the Principal and of Mary, was the first monitor we found being mentioned.

On October 19th 1860, the records note:

a £1 gratuity to Mrs. M. Finnegan relict of late teacher Edward for the latter's service in instructing monitor John Finnegan.

This is the only indication that Edward Finnegan had died. Possibly the poor man was ill for some time, this would explain some of the adverse commentary on his work over the previous couple of years. We know little else about the Finnegan family.

Another monitor was James McDermott, who was replaced by Richard McDermott who taught as senior monitor from January 1863 to Jan 1865, when his salary was withdrawn. By September 1865 the teacher was advised 'to exert himself more in teaching classes and to secure more regular attendance'; he was also 'severely reprimanded for want of progress'.

In July 1872 the teacher Jno. Healy was 'reprimanded for inaccuracies in accounts and for low proficiency'. An assistant in the late 1870's was Daniel O'Sullivan and Martin Boyle was monitor for a short time also. A note of 1874 urges the Manager

to admonish teacher Michael Flanagan for allowing pupils to prompt and copy when under examination.

This was the first mention of Michael Flanagan who was principal of Doolin school for many

years. The manager's attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory state of the privies in 1875, and he was informed that 'it devolves on local parties to keep them in order.' In the following years the trend was somewhat similar. A clock was recommended by the inspector, and in 1885 the manager was requested to provide maps of Ireland and the World.

The attendance never reached the figures projected in 1846 but in the intervening years the famine had decimated the whole population of Killilagh.

The average numbers on Roll for 12 months:	
1863	60
1864	58
1865	50
1866	60
1867	61

In 1893 a grant of £20-18-4 was made towards providing a new floor and ceiling in the male and female schools. The total cost was £31-7-6. In 1896 Michael Flanagan was admonished for lack of punctuality in attending at his school in the mornings. Previous to this he had been asked to explain why a pupil who had left school before closing time had not been marked off the roll. However, his explanation to the inspector was satisfactory and there was no action taken.

More trouble was in store for Mr Flanagan. A parent reported in 1896 that the teacher had left the school during school hours to attend to his business as a farmer and frequently absented himself to attend fairs and markets. There were other complaints also concerning land bought by the teacher and that by these acts he literally 'took the bit out of the writer's children's mouths.' Father Power the Manager, was very doubtful about all this, especially the signature on the letter and asked for the letter of the parent for examination. The Board informed him that 'as the

letters had become official records his request to have them sent to him for examination cannot be acceded to'. Fr. Power's reply was that there was no foundation whatever for the charge as the land referred to had been taken ten years previously. Finally, it was decided by the Board that 'it is not necessary to take any further action'.

As the school reached its 50th year it was beginning to look the worse for wear. The usual exhortations and assessments of the inspector continued. In August 1898 the Manager's attention was drawn to 'numerous deficiencies in the proficiency exhibited by the pupils of the senior classes.' Later in 1898 a new fuel store was proposed at a cost of £6. A grant of £4 was offered, but the local contribution of £2 was not forthcoming. The Board cancelled its grant since the work had not been carried out. Going into the new century a report on the condition of the school stated that

the roof of the out office leaks; windows are not staunch; painting is required inside and outside; whitewashing is needed.

The Board of Public Works was contacted for execution of these repairs.

The 1901 Census of Population for the townland of Doolin lists Michael Flanagan NT and his family. In the year of the Census Michael was aged 49 while his wife Catherine, also a national teacher, was 37. They had four children - Lizzie (12), Mary Ann (9), Michael J. (6) and Katie (4). A niece of Michael's, Catherine Queally aged 14 and a monitor in Doolin School was also listed with the family as well as Bridget Considine, mother-in-law aged 70. Listed in the census for the townland of Teergonean was Mary Anne Boland National Teacher, widow aged 51 and her daughter, Elizabeth Boland, Assistant Teacher aged 21 not married. In Doolin another teacher is recorded - Bridget Thomas aged 54, not married.

Memories of Doolin School

My sister **Bridie** Sheehan of Boston (formerly Bridie Griffin of Ballyvara) recalled her schooldays:

In 1935 when I left home to work in Galway Lulu Williams - a sister of Johnny Williams - taught in the junior division of the Girls' school in Doolin (The Williams family lived in the farmhouse across from the school). She married Joe Doherty of Toomullin House. At this time my aunt, Nora Walsh (formerly Griffin of Ballyvara) taught in the boys' school - that was in the junior division (upstairs). Tim Sexton was Principal of the boys' school then. Before him Michael Flanagan was principal of the boys' school and his wife was principal of the girls' school.

A new teacher - Miss Cleary - came to replace Mrs. Flanagan. Tim Sexton and Miss Cleary married and lived in the house at the nurse's cross (in Cronagort). Afterwards they moved to Lisdoonvarna and lived in a house near the Stella Maris. They had a large family, but Mrs. Sexton died young. I can recall going in to Lisdoonvarna to help at the wake and afterwards, after the funeral in the house. B. Donoghue - Paddy Donoghue's sister and later Anthony Moloney's wife - also went in (to Lisdoonvarna). B. Donoghue and I were pupils of Mrs. Sexton. Mrs. Considine (Bridget Hillary), aunt of B. Donoghue organised this. Tim Sexton's family were from Liscannor.

Bridie had some problems in School:

Mary Kate O'Connor, John O'Connors' daughter, Mick and Gussie's sister; she was the oldest of the family. She and I were the same age and we hung out together going to school. [There was only a] couple of weeks in between us. [One teacher] used to be hard on the kids ... she was very quick with the cane. [Most parents accepted that, but] John O'Connor wasn't like that. My father

wasn't. They were the two dads that would go down and tell her off.

So one time, Mary Kate, she was about 4th or 5th class. And [the teacher] she had no respect for kids [and was particularly mean to Mary Kate, who was crying]. The poor little kid. You wouldn't have a Kleenex. We never heard of them or a kerchief or anything so she just lifted up her dress and wiped ... her face.

And of course the next morning bright and early when school opened, her dad was there to see the teacher. ... he just gave her a piece of his mind. It didn't do any good but he got satisfaction, you know. And it was nice for all the rest of us to hear her getting yelled at.

Half of them shouldn't be teachers. Aunt Nora was [different]. Oh, everyone loved her. Every kid from Doolin School. Mike O'Connor, every kid in the boys school went to Aunt Nora up to 3rd class.

Mary Kate came here (to America). She lived in Cambridge. I went to her wake just before I came here. I think it was the year before I came here. She (MaryKate) married Buddy Lane. He was born here. And they lived in Cambridge, St Peter's Parish up there. Grandville Lane, I think was the name of the street. But she was very nice.

[The teacher was so mean to me once that] Mairead (Doherty) next door and Delia O'Connor, next to us ... ran home and told my parents ... Everybody came home and told their parents. I think everybody in Doolin School came home and told their parents. And of course when Delia O'Connor told her mother she ran over to my mother and she told her.

When I came home from school they were waiting for me because I wouldn't have said anything. You didn't come home and say

you were [punished] in school because they would say 'well, why didn't you do your work?' We'd be blamed. The teacher was always right. They thought she was. As soon as I walked in the door my mother [asked me what happened]

[It all happened because] I didn't have the right answer (in maths).

[The teacher] always put the problem on the board. It was long division. We were in 6th class. We were doing long division. It was 3 figures into a whole mess of numbers, and that's what they do in 6th class. And I was very good at it. I could do it with my eyes closed. I was so good at figures. And that's why I was good at the bank (Cambridge Savings) and First National. This day she did not put anything on the board, she just read the figures ... I could hear some but I missed one number.

At that time were you already deaf in one ear?

I didn't know it. Nobody knew it. [They thought it] was because I was heedless ... I didn't pay attention. And people that should know, like Aunt Nora [she] was a teacher - 'Oh well, go easy on her, she's just -give her time, you know. Don't rush her'. If I went to Mass on Sunday I couldn't hear the priest ... 'It's because you don't pay attention'

And when I worked in Galway, Molly was one of the smartest people. She was smarter than any teacher. [I remember her instructing me on how to deal with] Mrs Naughton, our boss. 'You know when Mrs Naughton is talking to you why don't you try to pay attention and don't give her that vacant look'. Even Molly didn't know that I couldn't hear. I didn't know. You don't know that you can't hear.

Then after I left Galway I babysat in town, in Lisdoon for a few months before I went to work in England. And the lady, she was from Scotland, the woman I worked for and

one time she said to me 'Now when you go home tell your parents that they should take you for a hearing test'. She was smarter than the Irish people.

I came home and I told them. 'Well, the nerve of her. Your grandmother is 80 years old and she can hear'. And Aunt Nell came. Well, Aunt Nell was a very smart lady too. She was Pakie's mother. And Aunt Nell was so mad she was ready to go over and tell her off. And Annie Queally. There was nobody like Tim's mother. Oh, I loved her. And she said 'Well, have patience with her you know, just leave her alone'. That's how Tim would be. He was just like her.

My Own Memories

Doolin school was an important landmark in my early life. It was a two-storey yellow building between Fitz's Cross and the Creamery (This was on the link road between the Roadford / Fisherstreet road and the Lisdoonvarna / Cliffs of Moher road). Because of the lack of trees, the school stood out noticeably in the landscape, and from my home in Ballyvara, I could see the school with Tuoclea chapel and Ballyreen, the beginning of the Burren, in the background. It was there in Doolin School that all my family started school; in fact, my aunt Nora (Walshe) taught there for years. When I was about five years old, my brother Jerry and my sister Kathleen, (both a few years older) took me to School to start my education!

I remember well the first day I saw the inside of the school. Firstly, I must explain the layout of the school: There were really two schools in the one building: The girls' school, downstairs, had two teachers, Miss B. Lyons, Principal, a severe small grey-haired Kerry woman, and her assistant was Miss Blood from Kilshanny who taught the junior girls. She was tall and very dark-haired and looked cross to us young children. However, I don't think she ever said a cross word to us. Looking back, all

teachers seemed very severe in those days; I have a notion that they were trained to be like that.

As I mentioned earlier, the Boys' School was upstairs, the stairs being outside and at the gable of the school facing the creamery. The steps were of blue-black limestone, and polished absolutely smooth from a century of busy little feet. I climbed the stairs with Kathleen and Jerry and entered the building to find myself in the Master's Room. At the end of the room was a partition with a door into the assistant's room where the junior boys were. Here I was handed over to Miss Madigan the assistant, Kathleen having gone down to the Girl's School and Jerry remaining in the master's class with 'the big boys'.

I cannot recall the Master at all. I think he may have been Mr. Stephens from Lisdoonvarna, but my mind was so totally taken up with my new surroundings, and the awesome Miss Madigan, that I ignored everyone else. Miss Madigan was from Ennistymon and lodged at Hurley's near Fitz's Cross in Doolin. She made an enormous impression on me. She was small and slight and wore glasses. She also wore lipstick and nail varnish - items rarely seen in the Doolin of nineteen forty.

Indeed, we looked on teachers in those days as if they were from another planet. It was during the war years, and we rarely saw strangers or visitors. I think that our parents viewed teachers in somewhat the same way as we did, and they never went to the school. I can never recall my mother or father visiting the school. There was only one occasion when a parent did come, and that was when the Master punished a child whose mother came to the school and had a great row with him. It was said that she threw an inkwell at him. I don't know if that is true, or if she did, whether she missed him or not! Anyhow, we were all suitably shocked, as were our parents, but deep

down we could not help but be delighted that somebody had the nerve to stand up to him.

The only other time parents came to the school was to deliver a load of turf. Each family took turns to supply the school with turf, and a horse-load of good dry turf was expected ... no 'spairt' or wet turf from 'the Top Barr'! The master sent word to the next family in line when the fuel was running out.

On that first day in school Miss Madigan took me down to the end of the class and sat me down among a group of other new infants. We sat on a long form which held seven or eight children, and Miss Madigan gave each of us a small black board and some chalk. We had no dusters, so the sleeves of our fine new jumpers were soon grey from the caked chalk-dust. The long desks in front of us were marked and pitted with the pencils of former pupils, and here and there some ink stains spotted the floor.

It was only when seated at my desk that I had the chance to look about me. Each window had several small panes of glass each measuring about 6 inches by 10 inches and here and there, the panes were missing or broken, but Miss Madigan had pinned cardboard on to keep out the breeze. My pals and I were at the back near the partition. There was an open fire at the top of the room but most of the cold morning had passed by the time the fire caught on.

I settled in quickly at school and enjoyed it immensely. There were children from all around us and from farther off parts of the parish. I remember the Davenports; Gussie started school with me, and they lived just down the field. There were Crawfords, Roches and Scales; Frawleys from Carnane; Careys and Moloneys from Luogh; Shannons, Guerins, Moloneys and Conners from Fisherstreet; Shannons, Dohertys and Tierneys

from Roadford; Lynches from Baracurra; Flanagans from Tuoclea; McCarthys from Ballyreen; Kerins from Boherbui; Joe Queally was there too, and though he was a couple of years older, he was a great friend and a close neighbour. I think that at times I spent more time in Queally's than in my own home. Of course, my own brothers Andy and Jerry and my sister Kathleen were in school at that time too. The older members of our family had left school when I started. There were several more people in the school, but these are the ones that come to mind.

We had no electricity in Doolin School. In winter, and especially coming towards Christmas, the classroom was often very dark, and we were delighted when we couldn't work. We had no running water either, but the river was only a hundred yards away, down across Fitz's field. There was no drinking water. The master used bring a big bottle of drinking water to school and sip it during class. Somebody must have told him that spring water was good for him!

The toilets were down at the end of the playground and had no running water either. The master would occasionally get a travelling tinker to clean out the toilets if one happened to come the way. A big wall divided the playground and on no account could a boy go into the girls' playground. There was total segregation, and this was a very strict rule.

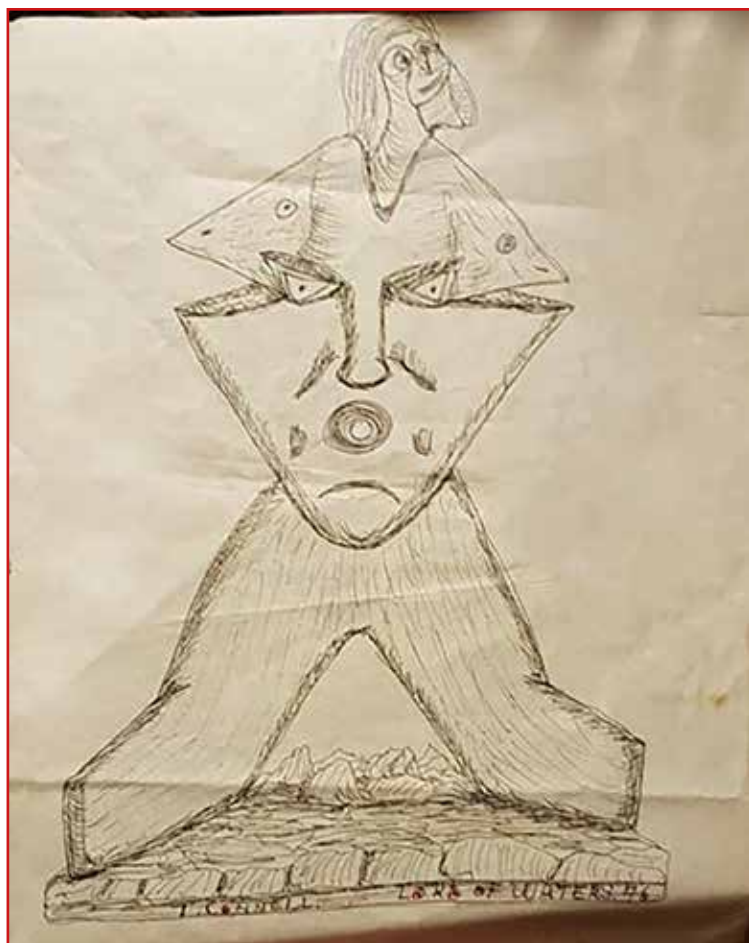
On that first day in school I could see the back of my own home from the desk where I sat - the door, the windows, the thatched roof - it was only a few fields away across the little stream, up through Queally's field, then through Doherty's, and then into our own well field at the back of the house. Just a few small fields away, but that day it seemed like a thousand miles.

This was Doolin School in 1940 when I started there. The books we learned to read made up for the hardship, and we often read the same book over and over again. Books were scarce, as was everything else at that time. By today's standards, it was pretty primitive, but we were very happy.



**Marble Carving of Nature &
Mythical Drawing of 'Lord of Water'**

Both works by Tom O'Connell from Doonagore. Note the three dimensional character of the carving - the hare's ear, becomes the rising bird from another angle, there is also a fish from another angle.



(Photos on this page by James Griffin)

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